

Egyptian Diaspora Cooperation with the homeland: migration networks and transnationalism between local contexts

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Egyptian diaspora cooperation with the homeland: migration networks and transnationalism between local contexts

Executive Summary*

by Andrea Stocchiero

1. A STRONG AND SPREADING MIGRATORY NETWORK...

The great economic differentials between Egypt (and specifically the Governorate of Qalyubiyah¹ for the field research) and Italy (the province of Milan) motivate the migratory flows. The motives for leaving generally comply with the usual reasons traditionally presented and studied in literature concerning migration, and particularly economic reasons and the strong attraction power exercised by networks. In general, migration tends to be functional to a “rapid” economic success.

Currently, the choice of Italy as a destination is heavily influenced by the existence of strong migratory networks. Italy is considered geographically and socially close to Egypt as well as being seen as a country where it is possible to live, for a length of time, without having regular documents.

Interviews conducted in Egypt show that the migratory process is continuing and reinforcing. The migration pressure is high: the majority of the young and their families consider migration the more rational solution for the improvement of their well-being. Capacities for introducing new migrants are increased by the cumulative process generated by the network, and thanks to the great flexibility (informality) of the Italian labour market, notwithstanding the strictness of the Italian immigration policy.

Strong and structured networks exist and they point from the Banha area² in the direction of Milan’s metropolitan area. It is possible to identify specific trans-local networks between the small villages around Banha towards the Municipalities of Milan’s metropolitan area: from Kafr Saad towards Sesto

* The Executive Summary synthesizes the main results of the second analysis conducted by the CeSPI researchers Sebastiano Ceschi, Lorenzo Coslovi and Maria Mora, coordinated by Andrea Stocchiero, on the Egyptian migrant network between Kafr Saad (Banha area) in Egypt and Sesto San Giovanni (Milan metropolitan area) in Italy. This analysis is a case study that follows the research “Fostering Egyptian local development through diasporic networks in Italy” carried out by CeSPI in the beginning of 2004 (<http://www.emigration.gov.eg/publications/Publication.asp>).

Both researches are part of the Integrated Migration Information System (IMIS) project implemented by International Organization for Migration with the Egyptian Ministry of Manpower, financed by the Italian Cooperation and are part of the CeSPI MigraCtion research programme supported by the Compagnia San Paolo Foundation.

¹ The Governorate of Qalyubiyah borders on the Governorates of Cairo and Giza; it is an important crossroads for lower Egypt. Qalyubiyah has a good ranking in the Egyptian Human Development Index, and important industries are located there (textile, industrial equipment, mineral products).

² Banha is the capital of the Governorate of Qalyubiyah with 154,000 inhabitants, about 60% of the population over 15 years of age has secondary education.

San Giovanni, from Kafr el Gamal towards Cinisello, Abbiate Grasso and Trevigliano, from Batta towards Trevigliano and Milan.

Differentials and network between Sesto (Italy) and Kafr Saad (Egypt)

	Sesto San Giovanni (Milan’s metropolitan area)	Kafr Saad (Banha area)
Per capita income	28,000 euro per year	5,391 LE per year (690 euro)
Monthly per capita income and remittances	1,000 euro (migrants in Sesto)	200-400 LE (25-50 euro) ³ (families in Kafr) 200-500 euro per month of remittances
Family composition	15% of Egyptian immigrants with wife ⁴ and children	6-9 persons ⁵
Migrants	- 35% of migrants from Qalyubiyah in Sesto are from Kafr Saad - 22% of Egyptian migrants in Sesto are from Kafr Saad	- 10% of population of Kafr Saad emigrated to Sesto - more than 50% of young population of Kafr Saad emigrated to Sesto

The Table highlights the main data summarizing trans-local differentials and network. The case of Kafr Saad⁶ is very impressive: more than 50% of its young population emigrated to Sesto San Giovanni⁷ (in Egypt Kafr Saad is called Kafr Italy! But it could be better known as Kafr Sesto); these migrants count up to 23% of all the Egyptians living in Sesto, while all the Egyptians represent 22% of foreigners with residence in Sesto (around 2% of the total population). In the last four years Egyptian immigration to Sesto increased by 70%, thanks to the formalization produced by the implementation of the regularization law. This shows how irregular flows are continuing.

...BUILT BY FAMILIES.

Egyptians emigration is significantly that of young males with a good education level, whereas female presence is always related to family reunification processes. It is lower than that of other nationalities. Egyptians leaving their homeland come from the lower middle class and tend to have completed secondary education. They are not the poor.

Generally, within a family, it is the eldest son that leaves. A selection process of the youth designated for migration has been observed.

The decision of emigrating seems to be less “individual” than what was theorised in the first research phase carried out in Italy, and in several cases a strong degree of planning by the head of the family was registered. The head of the family, in fact, organizes the departures and manages the funds that

³ Average income declared by families interviewed in Kafr Saad.

⁴ Calculated according to data available from the Sesto San Giovanni census: adding up Egyptian women from 20 to 69 years of age to the total of men in the same age range, the result is a percentage of 15%.

⁵ Considering the nuclear family: father, mother, sisters and brothers.

⁶ Kafr Saad is a rural village near Banha. It has 3,600 inhabitants, about 66% of the population over 15 has secondary education.

⁷ Sesto San Giovanni, in the metropolitan area of Milan, has 83,000 inhabitants, and important high-tech and manufacturing industries as well as financial services.

make them possible. There are definite family strategies behind each departure. In this sense migration is strictly linked to the family reproduction cycle.

The necessary funds for the departure of the first family member are gathered through: personal savings (which are, however, rarely enough), the sale of land or animals, loans from family members or friends and, in some cases, a loan from a bank (obtained by taking out a mortgage on a house). As far as the departure of other family members is concerned, remittances are the primary source of funding.

2. MIGRATION NETWORKS ARE CONSTRAINED BY THE LABOUR MARKET CONTEXTS...

As far as the employment sectors and patterns of access to working environments are concerned, on the Egyptian front, it has been observed that families have a more or less precise idea, not only about the type of job their relative has in Italy but also about the employment sectors to which their fellow countrymen usually have access: cleaning services, construction and catering. It is interesting to point out how working as a cleaner is socially acceptable as it is done abroad and it is well paid, whereas it would not be at home, where “everyone could see” and with an Egyptian salary. Many migrants depart without having prior working experience. Only in the case of employment in the construction sector, there are cases of working continuity in Egypt and in Italy.

The Italian labour market is highly segmented. It constrains Egyptians (as well as the great majority of immigrants) in low skill jobs and it produces brain and skill waste. From another point of view, the brain and skill waste is somehow balanced by the high rate of Egyptian entrepreneurship. Egyptian entrepreneurs own about 18% of all foreign enterprises in the Milan area. Their entrepreneurship rate (7%) is lower only compared to that of the Chinese. Egyptian migrants reach social and economic mobility by starting up new small enterprises in continuity with their preceding jobs (construction and cleaning sector) and in the field of ethnic and migrant services (phone centres, ethnic food and restaurants, Islamic butcheries...). A note of caution must be attached: many small enterprises are a form of outsourcing and flexibility which are, actually, masked dependent labour.

...WITH FEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR SKILL CIRCULATION.

It is rare for migrants to use the skills acquired in Italy (which also tend to be considered useless within the context of origin) after their return to Egypt. According to the interviewees, in Egypt, at the moment, it is not possible to make the most of the skills acquired in Italy. In particular, in the Milan area, economic integration and access to a work environment, take place within sectors which do not favour the acquisition of skills that can be used in Egypt, neither upon return home, nor with regard to the possibility of training other potential migrants.

However, in Banha, there are already some interesting cases of capacity transfer between Italy and Egypt. It is the case of some important entrepreneurs in the shoemaking and paper industries. In both cases, the relationship with Italy is continuous, and the set up of the industrial machinery in particular, is carried out by Italian specialists who then supervise the training of employees.

3. TRANSNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS CONTINUE TO BE HIGHLY RELEVANT AT FAMILY AND CULTURAL LEVEL...

Migrants communicate day by day with their families by phone and internet services (a small number of them). They also buy television sets and satellite dishes in order to watch and listen to Arabic and

Egyptian channels. Their cultural space continues to be that of the homeland and their individual lives continue to be dictated by familiar linkages and reproduction cycles (especially with regard to the marriage choice). At the same time, their working lives and economic interests (in the cases of enterprise start-up) are located in the Milan area. The social values of the territory of origin are embedded in the migrants, but individual emancipation processes may be observed for those who are successful in the economic sphere (representing the “big brother” for families).

Temporary returns usually occur during the summer holidays or in coincidence with the *Ramadan* month, depending on the migrant’s possibility to take time off his work in Italy. The period of time that spans between migration and the first return, tends to be the longest (sometimes because this period extends until legal papers are obtained). Subsequent returns home to Egypt are more regular, even if, in most cases, not more often than once or twice a year, for 3 to 4 weeks on average.

During these return trips, migrants tend to be on holiday for most of the time (visiting friends, family, going to the seaside...), but, in the case of the head of a family these days are also used to supervise and decide on work connected to building/restoring a house and to make investments. When migrants return to Egypt, not only do they bring money, but also gifts for all the family (in an extended sense) such as clothes, toys, Hi-Fi equipment, Play Stations...

In general Egyptian migration to Europe (and Italy) is defined as permanent with no return (at least not until pension age), but the picture is more complex. The interplay of different variables influences the choice to return. An open return model may be sketched along three typologies of migrants: 1) the financially successful migrant (the entrepreneur) who has achieved family reunification and only considers the option to return at pension age; his transnationalism is especially at cultural level; 2) the migrant working as a dependent (most of the cases) who aims at returning permanently as soon as he reaches his saving goal; his transnationalism is focused on the social and family sphere; 3) finally, the migrant who increasingly feels the desire to be with his family and decides to anticipate his return; his transnationalism is tightly family dependent. Even when family reunification in Italy occurs, this type of migrant would like his children to return to Egypt, accompanied by their mother, when they reach school age and for himself to join the rest of the family a few years later. However this is more a desire than a real event. There are also cases of returns to Egypt which are planned as definitive, but that are not: after the failure of a project or due to the need for more money, there is a new departure.

...WITH A CUMULATIVE AUTO-REPRODUCTION OF MIGRATION FLOWS.

The strong Egyptian migrant network and transnationalism in the framework of the continuing and increasing economic trans-local differential between departure and arrival contexts facilitate and determine a cumulative auto-reproduction of the flows. Six cause and effect nexus may be identified. 1) The migratory patterns create new needs and demands (in terms of an improved way of life and of the disproportionate increase in the price of land or of the amount of money traditionally needed in order to marry –*mahr*) which spur new out-flows. 2) Successful migration experiences (demonstration and diffusion effects) confirm and diffuse the validity and profitable perception of the migration choice. 3) Migration improves the education level of youths in origin territories through the investment of remittances, and the young and educated are the most willing to migrate. 4) Remittances are directly invested in new migration flows. 5) Migration causes income distribution inequalities in the context of origin which motivate new migration flows. 6) Migration becomes a “natural” and rational choice for the reproduction cycle of the family.

4. THIS GENERATES A CUMULATIVE PROCESS INCREASING THE EGYPTIAN DEPENDENCE ON MIGRANT'S REMITTANCES...

The continuing migration flow corresponds to the remittance flow (labour against financial flows). During the first part of their stay in Italy, migrants don't usually send remittances home (they need the time to find a job and settle in). There is not much regularity as far as sending money is concerned and the lapse of time between one money-transfer and another varies a lot from one family to another and is never on a monthly basis. After stabilization, money-transfers usually occur about every 2 months, for an average total of 8,000/10,000 euros a year (the cash carried home personally by migrants during their visits, is obviously included in this amount). The channels used for remittances are nearly always informal, due to the numerous opportunities that the migratory network offers (trips made by relatives and friends).

Banks are in fact basically used for savings and only under urgent circumstances for money-transfer. Remittances are deposited on current accounts once they are received (on the father's bank account if the migrant is not married, on his own if he is). According to banking sources, these accounts are both in foreign and local currencies in a 50:50 proportion according to preference for the stability of a foreign currency or for the higher interest rate offered on accounts in local currency. Also, according to these sources and to the results of the interviews, there is a large amount of funds, originating from remittances and deposited in banks, which do not get used for investments.

While away, migrants delegate a relative or a work partner to handle their banking activities. The money is always addressed to the head of the family/father if the migrant is not married, to his wife if he is. In the case in which a migrant is not married, his remittances are handled by his father who "informs" his son about the use that is made of the money rather than agreeing upon it with him. However, the son still has the freedom to decide about the furnishing of his home and his own personal savings. When the migrant himself has a family, and therefore is its head, he handles the money himself and makes all the decisions, apart from the ones concerning daily household and family expenses. All the information the migrant receives concerning the use of the money sent home by him, is given over the phone which is the preferred channel between a migrant and his family to communicate on a regular basis, nearly every day, all through the migrant's stay in Italy.

Remittances are used according the following sequence of priorities: for the upkeep of the family, for financing the education of siblings, for departures of other family members, for medical expenses, for building a home, for marriage, to purchase land, to start-up small enterprises. When an investment does occur, banks confirm that, in most cases, it is in land and in the building sector (patrimonial investment). Investments made by migrants, both in rural and urban areas, are in traditional and low risk sectors, and there is no trace (except in a few cases) of a link between emigration and entrepreneurial innovation.

...WITH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACTS

The field analysis made it possible to highlight the positive and negative impact of remittances. The quality of life has undoubtedly improved, in particular after the introduction of the Euro. The improvement is measured in terms of quality of life (food and living conditions – education expenses) and of the possibility of setting up small businesses. However, the negative impact of remittances themselves on the distribution of income at a local level is also important: investments in land/homes have made the prices rise so much that it is unlikely for families which do not have migrants within them, to be able to purchase land (and build a home). As a consequence, the value of *mahr* has risen too.

On the other hand, the distribution of income and the new jobs generated by remittances, in particular through property investments, spread to neighbouring villages. The powerful attraction of the income increase for those who emigrate has triggered an increase in emigrations which has contributed to reducing manpower in the micro-contexts of origin, generating local skill shortage. Because of this, companies contracted by migrants to build homes and buildings, have to recruit labourers and workers outside the villages in which these homes are being built. In a similar way, commercial activities and farm land are often leased out to people from other nearby villages.

It is, therefore, difficult to measure the net impact of remittances on income distribution, whereas there does not appear to have been any significant boost for economic development on a local level, apart from the case of the construction business, in terms of new and varied businesses starting-up. This way, a new economy depending on migration flows is expanding, and it does not, so far, appear to be taking advantage of remittances in order to generate an endogenous development. For this reason, it appears obvious that a stronger channelling of remittances and in particular, support for their productive use (alongside a strong campaign against illegal emigration and control and repression of human trafficking networks) would be ideal and should be considered a priority.

...WHILE MIGRANTS PREFER TO INVEST IN ITALY RATHER THAN IN EGYPT.

As anticipated, migrant investments usually follow this order: home, marriage, land (within a rural context), small projects (commercial activities, taxis, real estate investments...). Adherence to traditional values prevails (partly, also for identity/social recognition reasons). In order to invest in land or small projects, migrants seek the help of relatives and friends who advise and inform them about good opportunities on the market. Even when starting up small enterprises, migrants seek advice among these people or from someone who already owns a business similar to the one they want to open and not from the appointed institutional structures such as the Chamber of Commerce, for which migrants openly show mistrust and to which they turn exclusively in order to carry out the legal procedures once they have started up the business.

The choice of traditional investments is also linked to the role ascribed to migrants which is to support the family, for example, by guaranteeing employment for siblings. This choice is also influenced by a strategic evaluation: keeping a low profile means, in fact, not attracting the attention of beggars and institutions which are seen to be corrupt, as well as not becoming object of a taxation scheme which is considered oppressing and also because migrants are adverse to the idea of requesting bank loans.

From another point of view, migrants prefer to invest in starting up small enterprises in Italy where the economic and institutional environment is better than in Egypt. Again, the differential motives a rational investment choice. In Sesto San Giovanni there are 260 Egyptian enterprises registered with Milan's Chamber of Commerce, concentrated in the building and commerce sectors. In the metropolitan area they are 2,683 and, in total, 5,214 in Italy⁸.

However, information gathered in Banha highlights that migrants are investing also in their city in commercial and craftwork activities, but outside official channels. The problem lies in how to improve the business climate and favour higher risk and innovative ventures.

5. REVERTING THE PROCESS? OPPORTUNITIES FOR COOPERATION...

Does it make sense to revert the process? Is it possible to enhance the migration flows for a broader base and/or a more innovative Egyptian development? In the short term, it is very difficult to foresee a reduction of migration flows. They are increasing and spreading. Development projects aimed at

⁸ See "Fostering Egyptian local development through diasporic networks in Italy", Andrea Stocchiero, CeSPI, May 2004.

reducing the migration potential collide with the more relevant forces of the North-South economic differentials existing in the Mediterranean. Beyond necessary macroeconomic, industrial and technology policies, those differentials could be partially diminished if migrants had opportunities to enhance their capitals for family well-being and local development.

Besides measures to improve the local business environment, it is possible to recognize the role of migrants as new agents for development. Egyptian institutions should shift from rhetoric to action, giving migrants real signals of interest, for example, by incentivating or facilitating self-organization and access to information and assistance for investment in their origin territories and cities.

The research highlights numerous shortcomings. However some examples of migrants' potential are evident with regard to entrepreneurial and finance capitals, cultural interests and even social development initiatives (as we shall see later). But, first and foremost, the strong migrant networks linking specific territories, which emerged very clearly in the course of the research, offer new cooperation paths. In fact, the main concept is that IMIS should aim at contributing to the reduction of Egyptian dependence on remittances by improving local development through a territorial and partnership approach with solid roots in specific contexts and networks. The computerized nature of IMIS implies that, in order to be concrete, it needs to connect to the actors (migrants and their families, their enterprises) in the places where they carry out their activities, that is to say, where they live and work. To be successful in the creation of ties, trade and investments, it is necessary for IMIS to latch on to the spontaneous networks constructed over time by migrants, strengthening them in order to promote Egyptian development. IMIS has to be where the migrants are so, as far as Italy is concerned, in the area of Milan in particular, where more opportunities for making the most of economic and social capacities exist, while in Egypt more opportunities materialize in cities like Banha rather than in the rural villages. The following guidelines for action may be put forward according to the categories of human, social and financial capitals.

...ENHANCING MIGRANT HUMAN CAPITAL IN SKILL CIRCULATION, TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Notwithstanding that most migrants suffer brain and skill waste in the Italian labour market, the high Egyptian entrepreneurship offers opportunities for enhancing their skills in support of local development in the homeland. There are a significant number of Egyptian entrepreneurs in Italy who already operate in connection with their native country or who are interested in developing commercial activities. Projects on skill circulation and promotion of trade and investment may be implemented.

A network of business migrants for the development of commercial activities, investments and exchange of knowledge/skills with the homeland could be set up by the Italian-Egyptian cooperation (through a prosecution of the IMIS project). A "club" of migrant business pioneers could emerge in the Milan metropolitan area in partnerships with banks and service agencies (Chamber of Commerce, other entrepreneurial organizations). A research for the mapping of entrepreneur migrants and relationships with Italian businesses (in cooperation with the Commercial Consul of the Milan Chamber of Commerce) can identify the pioneers, while a network of technical and financial services should be made available to them. The services should offer information and evaluation assistance on trade and investment initiatives.

However, the basic problem which has to be overcome is the mistrust of migrants towards Egyptian institutions. In this regard, the Emigration & Egyptians Abroad Sector of the Egyptian Ministry of Manpower and Emigration could play a relevant role in creating new friendly relationships with the diaspora, giving real connection services, and increasing the awareness and service delivery of the other Egyptian institutions to migrants.

...ENHANCING MIGRANT SOCIAL CAPITAL IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

The research shows that there are no Egyptian migrant organisations working in the field of community development in the homeland. The only organisations with which migrants interact are the religious ones (*gamaiyat al-khairiya*) which are focused more on the concept of charity than on the one of social development. In general, there are few associations and, in most cases, this is explained with the concept: “here every one does their own thing”.

Although it is true that strong associations are not to be found either on home territory or among migrants themselves in destination countries, this does not rule out the existence of social solidarity mechanisms among migrants. One relevant example is that of Kafr el Gamal. The CDA of Kafr Gamal (Tukh) is formed also by members that have had a common migratory experience in Italy. While living in Italy, they had, in fact, duplicated the association form of *gamaiyat al-khairiya*, and they had set up an association of Egyptians. Upon their return to Egypt, they went back to this structure but, alongside *gamaiyat al-khairiya*, they also set up the CDA. This association has a direct line with the Egyptian community abroad through the same channels used for the collection of *zakat*: *gamaiyat al-khairiya* and the CDA have 15 members which represent nearly all of the extended families of the village. When a project is presented, each representative has the task of informing the members of his extended family living abroad about it. This way, the CDA has made it possible to build a road, which connects the village directly to the city of Tukh (by purchasing the land on which the road was built), three schools and a small hospital.

Even in this case, a map of best practices within community development supported by migrants could be drawn up. The lessons learned by evaluating those practices may be diffused in the Egyptian diaspora, and a decentralized cooperation network for social and cultural development among the specific contexts of origin and arrival could be created. This could be implemented, for example, between the municipalities of the Milan area and that of Banha. The network could serve the migrants also for cultural activities.

...ENHANCING MIGRANT FINANCE CAPITAL FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

The research highlights the great importance of the remittance flows to Egyptian families and, specifically, the need to mobilize the savings accumulated in the local banks towards productive investments. A great amount of bank liquidity exists but it is not allocated in the credit market for local development.

In this case, building a network among local Italian banks and local Egyptian banks, parallel to the migrant network, for enhancing the savings coming from remittances could be envisaged. In the last years, Italian banks are devoting more attention to social banking and in this framework to migrant clientele. New financial products are being set up in order to increase the collection of savings and to offer dedicated services. A partnership and financial-technical cooperation for the identification and evaluation of investment opportunities in the local contexts could be useful for mobilizing bank liquidity and giving migrants, as well as local entrepreneurs, access to new credit.

At the same time, this banking network could create new financial instruments which would allow a link between saving and credit: for example, saving plans with insurance policies may be delineated as well as opportunities to access investment funds and credit. The implementation of these new financial products may increase the transfer of remittances through official channels.

Finally, all the initiatives listed above, should be documented with multi-media instruments (audio and video recordings, photographs and writing) on the IMIS website as a report on innovative pilot processes aimed at making the most of migrant contribution to local development. The space on the IMIS website designated for these projects, should act as a meeting point for the various economic/cultural/social actors involved in strong partnerships, for exchanging ideas and identifying new paths stemming from the migration and development nexus.

Egyptian diaspora cooperation with the homeland: migration networks and transnationalism between local contexts

Sebastiano Ceschi, Lorenzo Coslovi, Maria Mora; coordinamento di Andrea Stocchiero

1. THE MIGRATION CHAIN IN THE LOCAL SETTINGS

1.1 Introduction

This research follows a work completed in Italy by CeSPI taking three cities as examples (Rome-Reggio Emilia - Milan), and have as main aim the identification and proposal of possible *policy guidelines* to “Promote the local development through the Egyptian Diaspora in Italy”. This first study led the elaboration of practical and strategic hints set collected inside the Policy Paper: *Fostering Egyptian Local Development Through Diasporic Networks in Italy*⁹. In line with the results attained in this first stage of the project, it was decided to hone the research providing it with a simultaneous and multi-sited method of analysis, which can hit the interactions lying among different national and local spaces thanks to the presence and transnational custom of Egyptian migrants in Italy. Indeed, this transnational action flow, often involves two or more specific territories that become the props of this action. To fully hit the dimensions, implications, plurality of actors and relevance of the Egyptian migrants’ transnational action, it was decided to place the analysis in both the locations in which Egyptian expatriates’ presence and action take place and appear. Thus the survey, as already mentioned, should be multi-sited¹⁰ and simultaneous, able to understand, in a synchronic way, the “feedbacks’ game” that can exist among two or more territories.

In this specific instance the first of these areas was identified and chosen on the base of indications emerged during the first stage of the research, and consequently to some important territorial features. It is the urban area of Milan, and particularly some towns of its northern belt, where there is a considerable settlement of Egyptian migrants' conspicuous groups. The analysis focused particularly on Sesto San Giovanni, a town with 82.251 habitants, located at the northern border of Milan's territory. The most recent data (7th July 2004) show that, to this day, foreign people living in Sesto San Giovanni are 6.230, compared with all the population this number means the 7,6% of all the habitants. The Egyptian community is, numerically, the most relevant one, representing by itself the 22% of the foreign population living in Sesto. Therefore, this town appears as an important terminal for migratory fluxes coming inconstantly, from the Egyptian area and developed mainly during the last ten years. It highlights a concentration of people coming from the same place: Qalyubiya's Governorate, particularly from the city of Banha and some neighboring rural town, exactly the village of Kafr Saad.

⁹ Stocchiero, A. *Fostering Egyptian Local Development through Diasporic Networks in Italy*. Scaricabile alla pagina internet www.emigration.gov.eg

¹⁰ This term was introduced by Georg Marcus in an article, ten years ago (Marcus, G. 1995 “Ethnography In/On the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography”, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, n. 24). It points out an approach, in the social research, able to follow the subjects in their displacements, to move among different contexts and fields of connections in which the life of a migrant go over.

Thus Sesto San Giovanni was offering some advantage: displaying a strong and intense connection with a circumscribed territorial context in Egypt, clearly showing the importance and the running way of the attraction role played by the migratory chain and finally, having a great number of entrepreneurial activities managed by Egyptian citizens. In this way, it was possible to examine at the same time, a direct and specific interface between two locations, a stressed mechanism of family's call, a persisting tendency of how savings and investments are exploited on both sides of the migratory movement.

The provenance area where the survey was carried out in Egypt was identified in base of this clear preponderance of a specific emigrational area among the Egyptian population living in Sesto San Giovanni. This enabled to set the research on the two remarkable poles of a very intense and gathered transnational migratory link.

Simultaneity was warranted by the presence of two different researching equipments in the two indicated areas at the same time.

The main aim of this research's second stage was to completely analyze the local settings in which the Egyptian migrants' transnationality appears and come true: the original context (family, relatives and friends' nets, local authorities, entrepreneurial associations, NGO and associations for local development) and the destination context (migrants, local authorities, entrepreneurial associations, associations and subjects inside the local civil society). The local context, that represents the "opportunities' structure" which the migrant has concretely to relate with, and their modality of connection through the migratory movements, become in this way essential elements to understand delineations, intentionality, projects of these actors from which the transnational action rises and acts necessarily from specific places. A comprehensive analysis let us underline political, economic and social difficulties and limits to the possible strengthening, improvement and addressing of migrants' capital for co-development.

Concerning the origin country, the research focused particularly on the qualitative evaluation of the emigration's impact, with special reference to the impact of remittances. Then it investigated the family's participation in the decision procedures about use and management of remittances sent by migrants. The study also provided a deeper awareness of the emigration's causes, the migratory nets' formation, the migratory dynamics, family strategies and different emigration's modalities, enabling us to verify and, in some cases, correct the information collected during the first stage of the research. Finally, a first mapping of the various institutional or non-institutional actors, to be hypothetically involved, with different roles, in local development projects, was attained. These information, constantly crossed with the ones collected from the study made in Sesto San Giovanni, enabled a fluent observation on the movements (of people, capitals, goods, ideas and meanings) that join the two settings and enabled to highlight some proposal about possible strategies and modalities of intervention for the Italian Cooperation and the Egyptian Government, partner in the IMIS project. The study made in Sesto San Giovanni aimed on one side to find context's information, re-enact the story, the modalities and the features of the Egyptian community's settlement in this Lombardia town and its economical, social, cultural penetration in the local society; on the other side, to deepen the migratory events and the integration itineraries of single migrants. Special attention was given, to investigate the interviewed Egyptians' lives before and after their decisions of expatriate, the transformations occurred with the migratory experience on their family's relations, on life's projects, on intercourses with the native land and the host society, and finally, on concrete economical and financial (social and cultural, broadly speaking) projects achieved by the migrants.

In this chapter, some of the criteria and methodological instruments adopted by the research is going to be exposed briefly (par.1), to describe then the two setting where the investigation took place (par. 2), and finally define origin and development of this mechanism of chain recall (par. 3), emulation and

family re-union that lead a lot of habitants, from the villages around Banha to the vicinity of Milan (particularly the strong link tying Sesto San Giovanni and Kafr Saad will be analyzed).

In chapter 2, thank to the interviews made in the two sides, the collected material is going to be analyzed, retracing the stages of the migratory path: the family situation at the beginning, the emerging of the migratory project, means and modalities of expatriation, expectations and needs of relatives remained in Egypt (par. 1). The arrival and first settling-down in Italy, the fellow countrymen's role in the first reception and the job's starting up, stabilization's paths, juridical regularization of the immigrant's status, actual relations with the arrival's context (par. 2). Finally (par. 3), the actual, real or imaginary, connection with the native context will be taken into consideration, describing decisions regarding the family's dimension (weddings, re-unions, sons, family links), and the contact with the native society (mass media's usage, interest for the native country, evaluation of the two settings and judgment's transformations).

Chapter 3 is entirely dedicated to the economical action of Egyptian migrants through savings, remittances and investments (increase, by the time, of the incomes' capacity; repatriated money's use and management, modalities in remittances' sending, positive and negative remittances' impact); opportunities and limits of the native context (lost of contacts, family/friends' nets role, mutual trust/distrust); credit and banks; traditional investment; instrumental investment; opportunities and limits of the arrival's context; processes and temporality of independent job's start up in Italy; undertaken activities' typologies (continuity or innovation compared with the first immigrants and the first settle-down), starting up's modalities; projects tendency to future investments; places/reasons of the investments.

The chapter 4, that concludes the reports, underlines troublesome issues about Egyptian migrants' possible role as development factors in their native settings. Proposes some guidelines to increase the volume of cultural and commercial exchanges between Italy and Egypt, to develop the tendency of investing in Egypt, to attract interest of migrants-investors in Italy, that have some difficulties in starting new activities in the native society.

1.2 Methodology

As previously pointed out, concerning Sesto San Giovanni, the choice of this town resulted from information emerged in the first stage of the research. Knowing the quantitative and qualitative relevance of Egyptian presence in Milan's area¹¹, a particularly remarkable town was chosen: for the settlement (The Egyptian community here is the biggest foreign one), for the homogeneous origin features (most of the migrants come from Qalyubiya's Governorate), for their lively entrepreneurial activities (they are a lot and in different fields, as it will be possible to see).

Concerning Qalyubiya's Governorate, it was substantially chosen according to demographic motivations (the majority of Egyptian migrants living in Sesto San Giovanni come from this area). A first stage of material and statistic information's collection (presence, distribution, senior presence, age and sex's classes) was carried out in Sesto San Giovanni immediately before the survey's mission in Egypt and enabled us to identify the provenance of Egyptian migrants living in the town's territory. It is important to stress that the data possessed before the work made in Egypt were indicating the Governorate (Qalyubiya) only, sometimes the district (Banha), while just throughout this work it was possible to identify some small villages in which the majority of provenances is concentrated. (Particularly Kafr Saad – rural village belonging to the town of Banha).

¹¹ See Stocchiero, A., op.cit, particularly chap. 3

In the two survey's areas, missions lasting about two months were completed. In the Egyptian case, they were consecutive, more fragmentary in the case of Sesto San Giovanni.

An ad hoc outline for the questionnaire of the interviews was prepared and adapted every time to the two different settings and actors involved in the research. It was a necessary instrument to deeply investigate the economic transnationality mechanisms and dynamics. Without forgetting that transnationality declinations are various (economic, social, politic), and deeply intersected among them. In fact, it was decided to focus on the economic and financial dimension of the migrants' transnational action, like savings destination and use, transfers modalities and amounts, investment fields and projects. In the work carried out in Egypt the observation was supported by extensive interviews with different subjects belonging to the local reality.

54 far-reaching interviews were completed in the rural towns of Gamgara, Kafr Saad, Kafr el Arab, and Bata (Banha) as well as Kafr el Gamal and Saffa (Tukh) and in the city of Banha with:

- migrants' families;
- migrants permanently come back home;
- village's associations;
- local businessman with a migration experience in Italy;
- the local Chamber of Commerce's representatives;
- representatives of Bank-houses.

Three focus groups with young potential migrants¹² in Kafr Saad and Bata were set up.

The interviewed subjects were identified through different channels and with different modalities.

- Some migrants met before in Sesto San Giovanni, with whom several days were spent following them in their daily activities were contacted again. Through their mediation it was possible to complete interviews with the families and deal with them. In some cases, the migrants' mediation or their relatives' one allowed us to make interviews with relatives of other unknown Egyptian migrants living in Sesto. Most of the times this mediation, for different reasons¹³, did not outgo the family's border (however that may be, nuclear or extended – *Aila*, *Usra*);
- direct acquaintance as a result of a long presence on the territory;
- indications received by the research's partners (OIM Cairo, Ministry of Manpower and Emigration);
- information coming from different actors previously interviewed in loco.

Concerning interviews with migrants' families, the applied principles were: the migrants' place of residence (Sesto San Giovanni), their kinship degree (as close as possible) and the interviewees' role in remittances' management. To submit the questionnaire, as to complete the interviews, it was necessary to turn to a linguistic mediator employed in loco.

On the Italian side, activities of data and quantitative or qualitative information retrieval in Sesto San Giovanni's area were carried out thank to interviews to all the local subjects that, directly or indirectly, could give useful evidences to re-enact the economical, social and cultural integration frame of the

¹² This word means a group of categories that, in the reality, are distinct among themselves for level of migration project's progress: young people that just expressed their intention to leave, young people that started to plan their trip (saving money), and the ones that already tried to emigrate.

¹³ It is possible to summarize them as follows: difficulty in understanding our role as researchers, fear of possible repercussions on their relatives in Italy (a big percentage of these migrants are irregulars), pressures and bad relations among different families, evil eye's fear.

Egyptian living there. For this purpose, officials and operators belonging to the town's offices of Sesto San Giovanni, labor unions and professional associations local representations, researchers and various societies working in this area, the local bank and some institutions in charge of helping startup and development of enterprises' activities have been contacted.

In the same time, 17 qualitative far-reaching interviews with Egyptian residents (all male having a stay permit), about their insertion in the area's economic-social web, saving and repatriated remittances, actual or future projects and economic investments have been carried out. All the interviewees has been selected according to some set criteria, guaranteeing to focus the attention on particular subjects but, at the same time to diversify the interviewees' profile, enabling a comparison (regular migrants with at least two years of stay, not only businessmen but also employees, most of them coming from Qalyubiya, whose families, in some cases, were previously interviewed in Egypt).

The following table summarizes the interviews made in both of the areas:

Table 1: Interviews distribution

	Egypt	Italy
Migrants	3	17
Migrants businessmen		10
Migrants' relatives	19	
Returning migrants	6	
Local businessmen with a migration experience in Italy	4	
Potential migrants	12	
Institutional agencies representatives (Ministries, Governorate, District)	3	4
Village's associations and national NGOs' representatives	2	
Researchers, experts, policy makers	3	2
Banks, professional associations, Chamber of Commerce	2	2

1.3 The research settings

1.3.1 Egypt

The field research was carried out in the urban area of Banha, where some interviews were made to businessmen with a past emigration experience in Milan area, to some Institutions like the chamber of commerce and the Agricultural Bank and representatives of various associations. The interest was particularly focused on the rural village of Kafr Saad (Banha), where the great flow of migrants toward Sesto San Giovanni comes from; interviews in the rural villages of Saffa, Gamgara, Kafr el Arab and Kafr el Gamal (Tukh) and of Bata (Banha) were also made.

Qalyubiya's Governorate is one of the twenty-seven in which the Arab Republic of Egypt is divided. Located in the Nile Delta, it shares the southern border with Cairo and Giza Governorates, the

northern one with Dakahlia and Gharbia Governorates, the eastern one with El Sharkia and the western one with El Monofia Governorate, it has an area of 1.124 Km² with a population, according to the last assessments, of 3.804.188 habitants¹⁴, 1.960.564 males and 1.843.684 females. Because of its geographical position, it is a natural crossroad for the railway and route nets among the northern Egypt's Governorates (Lower Egypt).

Less recent data¹⁵, record a population of 3.621.600 habitants, 52% of them are males. The 52% of the inhabitants live in rural areas, the remaining 48% in the Governorate's urban areas. The population density reaches 3.221,00 habitants per Km². Qalyubiya's Governorate embraces seven districts (*markaz*), nine cities, two wards and 47 village's local units, with 195 villages e 901 small towns ("Kafir" e "ezbah")¹⁶. Inside the Governorate there are 4 main industrial areas: Shoubra el Kheima (behind Cairo), el-Kanka, Banha, and Qalyub. The foremost production activities are: textile manufacture, representing the 28,4% of the entire Egyptian product, ore products' industry (20,5%), industrial machinery's one and woodcarving. Qalyubiya's Governorate enjoys the richest agricultural soil of whole Egypt¹⁷, a large fish production and a great number of ovine, bovine and poultry farms.

The Human Development Index (HDI: 0,690) places Qalyubiya's Governorate at the ninth position among Egyptian Governorates, with an annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of 5391.8 Egyptian Pound (around 690 euro at the current exchange rate)¹⁸, a high alphabetization (68,8%, three percentage points higher than the national mean) and education rate (the 83,4 % of young people in school age are enrolled at primary and secondary schools¹⁹ in the academic year 2000/2001) and an unemployment rate of 7,5 % on the whole manpower (compared with the national 9% rate)²⁰. The Governorate has 1.300 schools and 11 universities. The Medical Corps is made of, at least on paper, 401 group practices, 212 family planning units and some specialized health units (kidney and neonatological pathologies).

Finally, being close to Cairo, Qalyubiya's Governorate is one of the city habitants' favorite destinations for the weekend out-of-town trips (particularly Qanater al Khairia's area), and is also the metropolis's natural agricultural storage.

Banha, has 153.300 habitants and it is the Governorate's capital since 1960. The city, an important railway junction, is part of that geographical area generally called "Big Cairo" and it is connected to the metropolis not just by the railway but also by a nonstop and efficient service of public or private transportations (autobus - taxi- microbus). It is placed in the Governorate northern zone. As quoted in Qalyubiya's²¹ official web site, there is a University with 12 different faculties and the main industries here concentrated are electronic, leather, perfumes, shoes and food-items' manufactures. Banha Human

¹⁴ Data relative to the 29/02/2004, including the living abroad population. CAPMAS (Central Agency for public mobilization and statistics)

¹⁵ UNDP, *Human Development Report in the Governorates, Governorate of Qalyobia 2003*. Data refers to 2000/2001

¹⁶ Literally translated from *Human Development Report in the Governorates, Governorate of Qalyobia 2003*. While the official Governorate's web site relates the following division: "The Qalubiya governorate consists of 7 local units for provinces and towns, and two towns, two districts, 46 rural local units, 195 affiliated and 901 fiefs and small villages" http://www.kalyobiya.gov.eg/about_q.html

¹⁷ The first level's agricultural soil represents the 81,8% of the land, while the 18,2% is of second level classification.

¹⁸ UNDP, *Human Development in the Governorates, Governorate of Qalyobia 2003*. The data refers to 2000/2001. Express as purchasing power parity (ppp \$) this amount is equivalent to 3.458 dollars.

¹⁹ Primary (6 years) and Preparatory school (3 years) are the compulsory basic education, while secondary school (3 years) is facultative.

²⁰ Is well-known that official rates don't reckon with underemployment and the broader phenomena of hidden unemployment's matters.

²¹ http://www.kalyobiya.gov.eg/about_q.html

Development Index (0,735) is the highest one inside the whole Governorate, and it has also the highest education rate (57,1% of the habitants has a secondary school degree or an higher one). The city has a vital open-air market with foodstuff sale attracting people from the surrounding countryside and a shopping area extending from the Railway station toward the Nile (that divides the city in two parts). In the new area of the city, *Banha el gadida*, administrative offices (Governorate offices; ministerial detachments), the University, community centers (a private and a public one), banks and the local chamber of commerce are concentrated. Big factories and industrial zones are relegated outside the city, on the way connecting Banha to Cairo. Obviously, the city offers a rash of attractions for the surrounding young rural population that comes here on Thursday night hanging out at open bars and fast foods along the Nile's *corniche*.

The rural villages of Gamgara (11.100 inhabitants), Kafr Saad (3.600) and Bata (14.000) are behind the urban town of Banha and a secondary road joins it to the villages. Kafr el Arab (7.100 inhabitants), which is further far from Banha, can be reached by a secondary road that branches off from the main road joining Banha to Cairo. Kafr el Gamal (6.500 inhabitants) e Al Safa (4.000) belong to the town of Tukh. Both villages have a similar distinctive space disposal and architecture: crossed by irrigation canals, they keep agricultural fields behind village's perimeter. The old houses made of mud and straw were replaced, throughout the time, by masonry houses with more than a floor (most of the time not finished), containing flats of married family members; the ground floor is usually yield to parents or exploited as common space, in some cases it lodges a small trade activity (kiosk; school equipments shop; bakery). Big buildings, reaching 14 floors, prove the economic success of some emigrants and strengthen the though that building investment is always the more safety one. It is amazing the deep shape's difference between private and public spaces: the good condition of private houses' construction, maintenance, accessories is opposed to the public roads, irrigation canals (often they are really open-air garbage dumps), lighting bad condition. The villages are connected to the city by private transportations (microbus o small suzukis, often managed by relatives of people emigrated abroad that started up the activities thanks to their help).

In all the examined villages there were one or more primary schools. In details, in Kafr Saad 66,5% of the population older than 15 has a secondary (or higher) educational level, the highest percentage among the villages of the whole Governorate.

Some of the examined villages have at their disposal medical units in loco too (group practice, or family planning units. Usually in this unit it is possible to find a small room for family planning, urgencies' room and a delivery one)²².

Schematically, emigration from these villages shows, in some cases, a plurality of destinations, Arab countries – United States and Canada – Italy (Bata and Kafr el Gamal), while from others ones, by now, emigration is headed forward specific local setting in just one country (this is Kafr Saad/ Sesto San Giovanni's case). The large emigration from these villages created a phenomena of attraction for people from the neighboring villages: in the building sector (builders are often required from the neighbor centers because of local manpower's lack), in the agriculture sector and in small trade activities (the management of several small shops opened in Kafr Saad are, for example, devolved to people coming from other villages).

²² The complete lack in medicines and equipments restricts the usability of this structure.

1.3.2 Italy

Milan district is one of the most populated nationwide and Europe-wide, with 3.775.765 habitants, mainly concentrated in its capital and big towns composing the huge hinterland. This district is the main Italian economic area, holding the 42,3% of the companies of whole Lombardia region, 6,5% of the active ones in all the national soil and the 15% of the hi-tech companies²³. The district produces a yearly GDP per capita of more than 28.000 euro, in absolute value, the 10% of the Italian one. There is a majority of companies working in the service sector (69%), followed by the ones working in the industrial (29%), and agriculture sectors (2%). The dynamism of this area conduce to a limited unemployment rate in Milan's district (4,5%) compared to the Italian mean (8,5%), 65% of the total manpower is operating in the service sector and 34% in the industrial one. Furthermore, there is an high rate of women's employment (40,7 compared to the national mean 32,8), and high is also the rate employed people working independently (23% of the total manpower). Other meaningful data about the high levels of well-being in this District can be the high rate of graduated people among the population (42,09 among the males and 35,47 among the females, average 38,61, against the national mean of 32,80²⁴), the presence on the province of 175 libraries, 39 museums, 2.787 sport areas and a parks and green areas' share corresponding to 50 % of the whole territory.

The foreign population is around 47 unities every 1.000 residents and migration flows seem lead by the attraction capacity of the huge metropolitan area, in which a growing demand of additional workers, not available in other ways, is noticed. According to the data provided from the Caritas Statistic Immigration Dossier 2004²⁵, upon 2.598.223 foreign residents in Italy at the end of 2003, 502.610 lived in Lombardia (equal to 22,9% of the total); among them 246.362 are recorded in Milan's District only (49% of the foreigners in Lombardia and 9,5% of the national amount). Considering the amount of foreign residents in the Milan district (the object of this study), the Egyptian national group is on first position and on fourth position on regional level with 31.096 persons. Thus, Egypt is the first native country among the foreign habitants in Milan and neighboring towns.

Egyptian presence in Lombardia is quite old compared with all the Immigration's history in Italy: it started around middle seventies, silently protracted during the following decade and exploded hence 1990 till reaching the current connotation.

This kind of migration is mainly male and shows few women's presence (around 15%), mostly deriving from family reunification and seldom earning an income through employment. As it is possible to see in details, in the case of Sesto San Giovanni the largest Egyptian migrants' age group is between 30 and 40 years-old, also if an important share of under age people is observable, especially between 0-9 years-old; there is a high-medium educational level and a remarkable number of expatriates owning a diploma or degree too.

In line with a disqualification phenomena often noticed in many studies about Italian migration realities²⁶, it is very unusual for Egyptians to find jobs corresponding to their qualifications and this subordinated jobs involve a wide range of low or medium qualification tasks in building, cleaning,

²³ All these data and the ones about GDP and employment rate were extracted from the web site www.provincia.milano.it

²⁴ According to Istat Census return 2001.

²⁵ A yearly book containing statistic elaborations, presence and foreign population settlements' situation in Italy edited by a researchers' equipe, organised by Caritas – Migrantes directorship (Dossier Statistico Immigrazione 2004, Anterem Rome 2004).

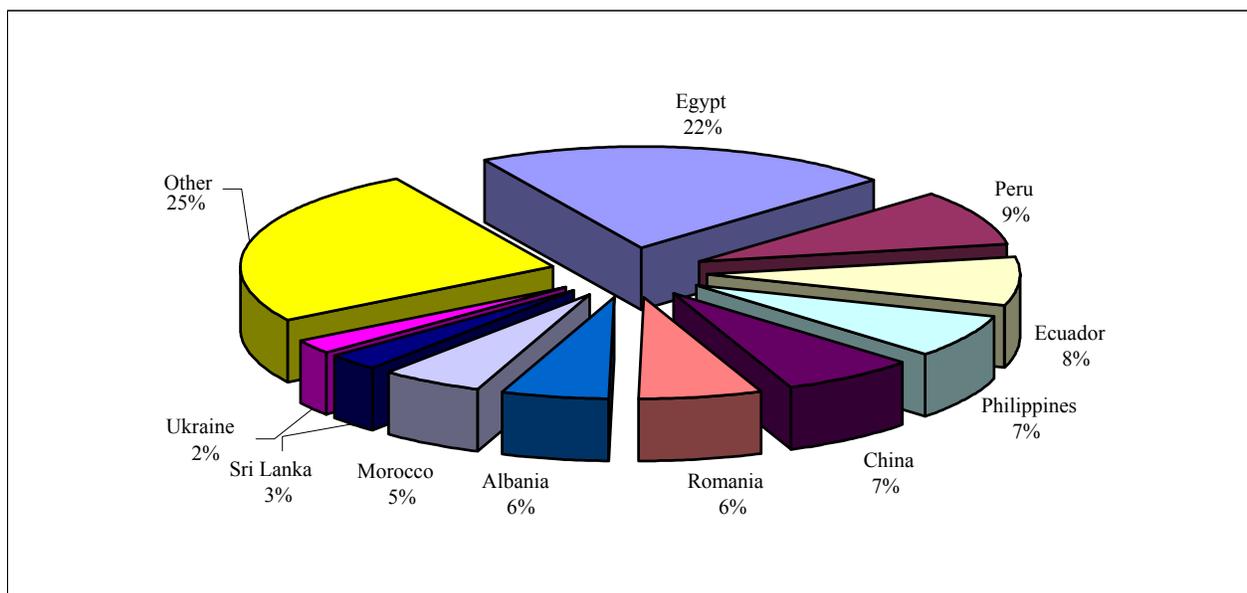
²⁶ On this subject, see Ambrosini, M. 2001. "Oltre l'integrazione subalterna. La questione della valorizzazione della risorsa immigrati", *Studi Emigrazione/Études Migrations*, XXXVIII, n.41, pp. 2-30; Carchedi, F. (edited by) 1999. *La risorsa inesplorata*, Edizioni Lavoro, Rome.

retail trading, or catering fields, as it will be later explained. The independent job seems to be a frequently followed path by Egyptian migrants, as already highlighted by surveys carried out in three Italian cities during the first research made by CeSPI for IMIS project²⁷. A new investigation, carried out by some researchers in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce of Milan, pointed out that in that area companies with Egyptian owner are the 18% of all the foreign companies working in the territory, the highest entrepreneurial rate (7,2%) after the one of the Chinese community²⁸.

On 30-10-2004 the specific reality of Sesto San Giovanni, as already seen in the introduction, recorded the presence of 1.553 Egyptians over a total amount 6.230 of foreign habitants, in a town of 82.251 habitants. It means, in percentage, that foreigners are 7,6% of the total population (a higher share compared with the national average, 4,5%), and immigrants with Egyptian nationality are the 22% of the whole foreign population, almost 2% of the global one.

The following graph explains the composition of foreign people living in Sesto San Giovanni classified by nationalities.²⁹

Figure 1: Composition, by nationality, of foreign citizens living in Sesto San Giovanni at 7/7/2004



Source: Anagrafe Comunale

As shown, more than 1 foreign citizen over 5 (22,%) is Egyptian. The data seems very interesting because any other nationality shows so high values; and, Egyptian habitants are more than the double of the second community, the Peruvian one, that represents 9% of the foreigners' total amount. The following table explains the last data collected during a research at Sesto San Giovanni's statistic office (up-to-date the 30-10-2004) about presence and allocation of Egyptian population living in the town, by gender and age.

²⁷ A. Stocchiero, op. cit.

²⁸ See Chiesi, A.M., Zucchetti, E. "Immigrati imprenditori. Il contributo degli extracomunitari allo sviluppo della piccola impresa in Lombardia", Milan's Chamber of Commerce, edizioni Egea, Milan 2003.

²⁹ The following charts belong to the research: "Tempi e spazi delle comunità straniere a Sesto San Giovanni", Comune di Sesto San Giovanni, Assessorato Tempi e Orari of the City, 2004.

Table 2: Egyptian population living in Sesto San Giovanni at 30/10/2004

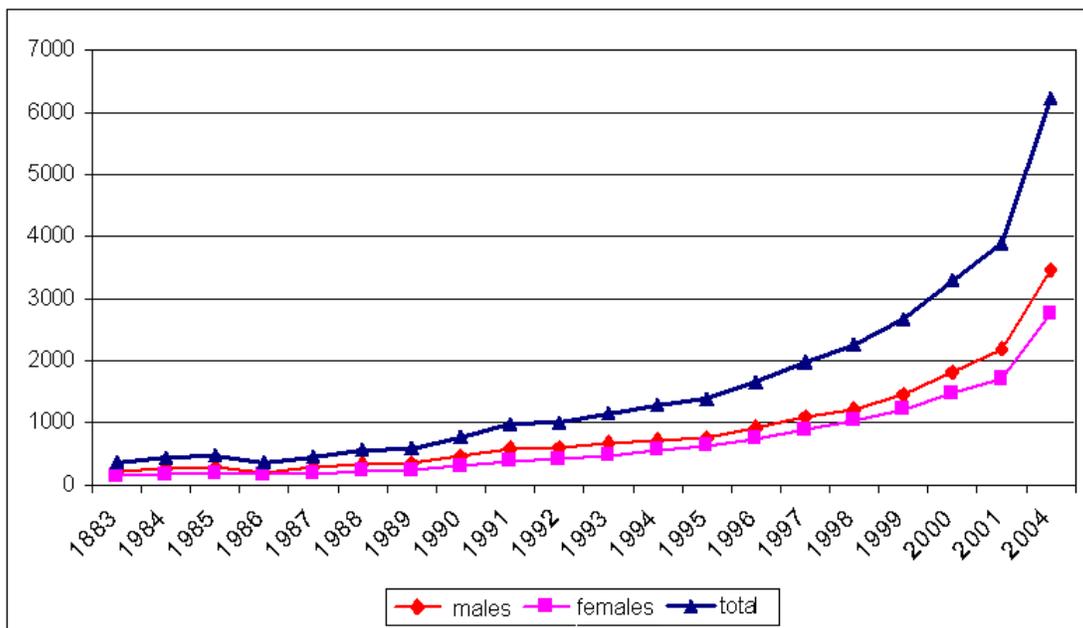
<i>Age</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
0-9	139	103	242
10-19	29	23	52
20-29	356	93	449
30-39	555	49	604
40-49	161	16	177
50-59	24	1	25
60-69	3	1	4
Total	1267	286	1553

Source: Anagrafe Comunale

Egyptian people's allocation in Sesto by age groups is typical of a still young emigration phenomena that shows a male concentration between 20 and 40 years old (911 persons over 1553, equal to 58%) but at the same time a certain number of over-forty people (188 men e 18 women, totally equal to 13,2%) with over 10 years of migration experience and a big share of people under 10 years-old (242, 15,5% of the amount). This highlights a family stabilization process that finds its confirmation in the huge amount of real estates purchases (through mortgages) made by Egyptian migrants in Sesto too.

Another element table 2 indirectly suggests is that most migrants (both males and females) arrived in Italy in the last 10 years, as it is underlined both by the national emigration trends and by the data and the interviews collected in Sesto. Actually, if during the '80s migrations were increasing and started to be relevant, especially in the big cities, only at the beginning of the '90s they became outstanding and a perceptible phenomena. Looking at Sesto San Giovanni, this trend is well highlighted in figure 2.

Figure 2: Foreign citizens living in Sesto San Giovanni from 31/12/1983 to 7/7/2004



Source: Anagrafe comunale

In Sesto it is possible to notice a considerable boost that, to date, does not seem to record any decrease. Throughout the '90s foreign population shifted from 588 units on 1st January 1990 to 2.675 units on 31st December 1999, with a consequent growth of 355%. Also the decade which has just begun gives us an ever-growing chart of foreign citizens' arrivals. In just four years and a half (from January 2000 to July 2004) the foreign presence doubled, with 133% increase, mainly due to the huge regularization process happened between 2002 and 2003 with the Bossi-Fini law.

Different reasons that help to understand why Sesto is again a destination place for new migrations can be singled out. Among these explanations, the most valuable is the one which places the town as part and parcel of what is called "Enlarged Milan". They do not arrive anymore in Sesto because it offers special job opportunities they cannot find in other town nearby Milan but because it is part of a metropolitan system that expresses, on the whole, an important manpower's request (in industrial and service sectors). This was noticed also by a new research carried out by Comune di Sesto.

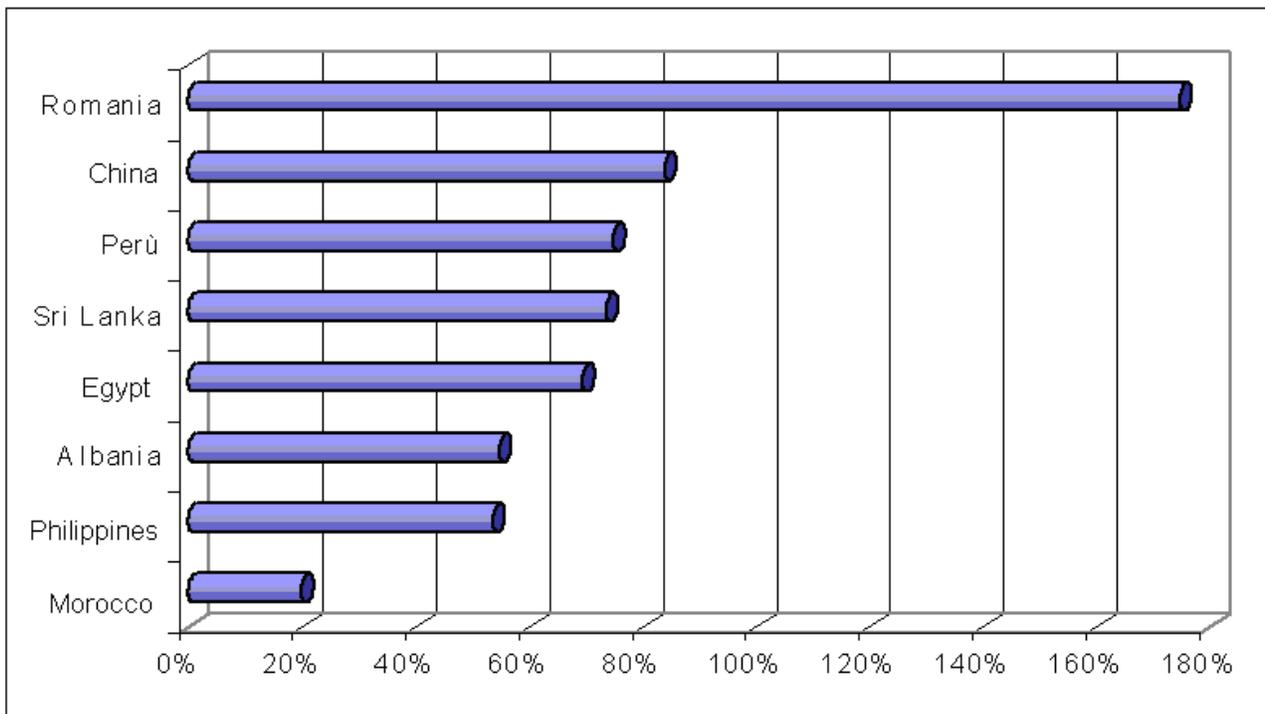
"It's interesting to notice how the described foreigner citizens' distribution shows some specificity compared to other Milan area's towns and to whole Italy too. Among these, it is worth to underline again the important Egyptian presence in Sesto that does not show such high percentages in other settings and can let us think that a strong calling effect has been created throughout the years, effect that is able to make flow together in Sesto, instead of any other town, a so huge number of Egyptian citizens".

In the Egyptian specific case, as shown in the next paragraph, the strong incoming flow can be explained on one side by the enduring extractive's ability of the place, due to call effect made by already settled-down relatives or friends and on the other side by the stabilization of a certain number of migrants that favoured wives or entire family groups' arrival. Also if Egyptian habitants grew less than other groups, it is interesting to notice that, despite the already big presence of this community in Sesto, the increase is anyway remarkable (+69,6%) from 2001 to 2004, highlighting a persisting migration flow that does not seem to decrease.

Looking at the gender composition, countries like Egypt and Morocco, even if they are the two most ancient communities living in Sesto, they show a very few female presence, respectively equal to 21,1% and 34,0%. The data, on one side, are startling because it is normally thought that the communities with longer migration tradition tend to balance their gender composition. However, in spite of the disequilibria between the genders at district's level, female presence in Sesto appears higher and suggests a bigger disposition to family reunification, probably due both to more affordable flats' rent, compared to Milan, and to a more ease in the reunification bureaucratic procedures.

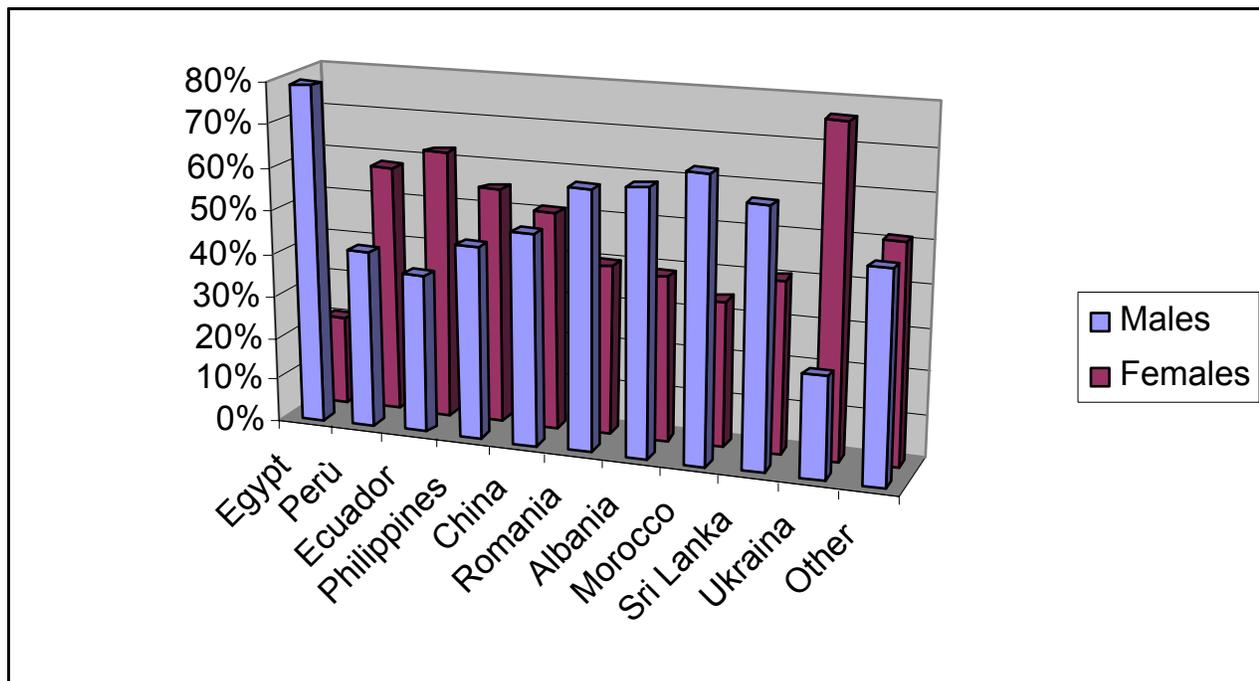
Anyway, as highlighted by figure 3, among the first ten foreign communities in the area of Sesto, the Egyptian one record lowest female percentage, and therefore the broader gap in gender composition.

Figure 3: Increases of main nationalities belonging to foreign citizens living in Sesto San Giovanni (31/12/2001-7/7/2004)



Source: Anagrafe comunale

Figure 4: Gender distribution among the main nationalities belonging to foreigners living in Sesto San Giovanni at 7/7/2004



Finally, it is possible to confirm the strong attraction ability exerted by Comune of Sesto San Giovanni, and in general by all Milan hinterland area on immigrated population, in particular on the one of Egyptian origin. The main factors are: compared to the crowded Milan, it is easier to find job and housing as easier is the relation with administrative institutions concerning the stay, residence and independent activity permit; there is a wider space for entrepreneurial activities, with both “open” (building, cleaning) and “ethnic” orientations (butchers, Egyptian shops or restaurants, phone centres).

1.4. The Migration chain’s creation from Banha and the rural belt around it to the metropolis of Milan: the Kafr Saad – Sesto San Giovanni instance

From the interviews performed in Egypt and Italy the presence of **strong and structured migration chains** headed in Milanese metropolitan area is clear. In particular from Kafr Saad toward Sesto San Giovanni, from Kafr el Gamal toward Cinisello, Abbiate Grasso and Trevigliano, from Bata toward Trevigliano and Milan.

The first departures from Banha and neighboring rural villages toward Italy began, in small number, at the end of the '70s and during the '80s. The migration movement comes, at the same time, from Banha and neighboring rural villages: Kafr el Gamal, Bata, Kafr Saad. According to the interviews collected in loco, from Kafr el Gamal, seven persons, now permanently come back, left at the end of '70; in the same period, three persons, them too definitely returned in Egypt, left from Bata. In the first part of the '80, Darwish left from Kafr Saad, he is the first one from this village to reach Sesto San Giovanni and he is evoked by the interviewees (in Egypt and in Italy) as an example of successful migration project. They were just sporadic departures, individually or in small groups, in limited number. Just in a second time, starting from the '90s, the migration flow becomes quantitatively considerable. In the '90s real migration chains were created, at the beginning family ones, making arrive in Italy many members of the same family.

At the end of the '70s, they are people that have often already experienced (personally or through a family member) emigration abroad (Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Yemen) and that moved to Italy without a particular reason:

Why I chose Italy? I don't know, because I read they are funny, Mediterranean. Because it's a country where people are nice, close to Egyptians, and then, as you know, they are not like German, or English people, then you know how is here with English ones...then there were a lot of Italians here, in old Cairo and Alexandria too, then it's less expensive. At that time the ticket to go to Italy was much less expensive than tickets to go in other places. A lot of Egyptians were going by boat; it was very cheap, 10 pounds... (I. one of the first three persons leaving from Bata to Italy in 1977)

Also in Banha and neighboring rural villages' instance, in the first part of the '90s a quantitatively relevant increase of emigration headed for Italy was seen. To the difficult situation of some Egyptian traditional emigration countries (Iraq and Kuwait in the first place), a huge number of Egyptians' return to their country and the need to find out new destinations is corresponding. In this frame, Italy starts to attract always more Egyptian migrants because it offers easier conditions to enter (during the 1990's Soccer World Championship) and to stay (in irregular way too). The first “pioneers” already living in the area give the first temporary shelter. At the end of the '90, the flow became so big than almost all the people of villages like Kafr Saad had at least a close relative in Italy.

The specific case of Kafr Saad, called “Kafr Italia” from the capital, Banha, and the neighboring villages' habitants, seems to deserve a special attention and perfectly exemplify the setting-up of a migration call mechanism from a particular area to another particular area. Even if it was not possible to extract from the “Anagrafe” of Sesto the Egyptian migrants' exact native town, but just the

Governorate (Qalyubiya) and, in some cases, the province (Banha), it was asked many times to interviewees coming from Kafr (9 over 17, equal to 53%) to assess the number of their citizens living in Sesto. The number pointed by all the interviewed people, fluctuated between 300 and 400 individuals. This means that the transfer of inhabitants from Kafr Saad to Sesto is impressive not just compared to the total amount of Egyptian living here (taking the average rate of 350 individuals, it reach the 22,5% of the total amount), but rather compared to the inhabitants living in this small rural village (3.600 persons), definitely less populated compared to the close Miet Rady and Gamgara (that anyway have a significant presence of their citizens in Sesto). So it is possible to state that about 10% of Kafr Saad's habitants are currently expatriated in Sesto San Giovanni and it is relevant to add to them all the people living in other urban towns of the northern belt of Milan. One of the interviewees declares on this subject: *"We live in Kafr Saad, a village close to Banha, where almost 80% of young people from this village lives here in Italy"* (R. int. 11). Even though it is not safe to take literally the percentage pointed by R., it is conceivable to assume that, among Kafr's young people between 20 and 35 years, the balance of residents in Italy is probably much more than 50%.

Nevertheless, how does this attraction's whirlpool effect toward Milan and its surroundings originate? Let give space to the narration of the migrants' interviews:

From Kafr we are a lot here in Sesto; in '90 when I arrived, there were just ten or eight persons. The first two came in '82, then in '87 4 or 5 came, then in '90 other 5-6 more or less. Then they start to see that the ones who left – because it's a small town and we're more or less all relatives among us, if not relatives brothers-in-laws and family linked among them, and things circulate, there's a lot of communication – became better, had moneys, built an house. So all the young guys began to think of doing the same, living to Italy or France or any other country you can reach (A. int. 1).

The first one came is Yassin Darwish, now he's a businessman, he has a lot of people working with him. He came directly from Iraq in the eighties because he didn't get on well there: he came here, he worked very hard for two or three years until he succeeded learning some words, he was able to find a place to stay and a place to work, he made a sacrifice, then he called his two brothers. One of them, when he came back, was telling his friends that here it was better, it was better than work in Iraq, and the others started to come here (R. Int. 11)

From these interviews it is already obvious the draw effect exerted by the narrations and above all by the economical success achieved by the first migrants. In the interviews it is frequently reminded the name of the first big pioneer that ventured from Kafr Saad to Milan in the remote 1981, Yassin Darwish, exodus's recognized ancestor and progenitor and now successful businessman, "millionaire" managing different entrepreneurial activities concentrated in Pioltello. Anyhow, it was probably Yassin Darwish's brother to rouse the "fever" for the Italian destination in Kafr Saad:

That one, Darwish, was the only one arrived in Milan from all Banha's area. He stayed here 5 years, went back to Egypt and brought 5 of his 6 brothers. They worked here, one of them went back and built that building that made everyone crazy, and all of them thought that Italy is a rich country, a paradise and many of them began to save money to come here. (M. int. 10).

In the '80s, the first one from Kafr came, he's now living in Pioltello, Yassin Darwish. Now, here, he's millionaire, he built a big farm, many houses, he also has 4 or 5 shops in Pioltello (a butchery, restaurant, bar); then he brought his brother who went back after two or three years and built a big house in a few months. So everyone there became crazy to go to Italy. With the world championship many people began to come, it started from this date with a tourist visa, then the visa commerce started. Kafr Saad was the first village in that area before Banha (M. int. 7)

Some comments about the migration connection created by Darwish and his brothers can be made. First, the elapsed time between the first arrival and the big exodus is quite long. This demonstrates that migration feedback on the native land needs some years for the expatriates' economical achievement and becomes concrete in particular circumstances: Gulf War and the flow crisis toward Iraq, the world championship in 1990 and the possibility to obtain tourist visa because of this happening, but also the "sanatoria", implemented at the end of the same year, which made it possible to the small settled group to regularize and to call for other relatives through legal ways.

Furthermore, the first Kafr's migrant concretely functioned as migration terminal for his fellows' townsmen, receiving them in his house and in a second time giving them a job in his cleaning society. Nevertheless, if Darwish represented a basic support for his fellows, making the settlement easier for them on one side, on the other he too gained from his mediator role in the local society and from his reputation among the new arrived people:

The only house of Kafr's people in Sesto was Darwish one and in his flat, he gave hospitality to everyone. But he wasn't so good, he took everyone for his benefit, he made them work around 13 hours per day with 300 euro per month in his cleaning society (G. int. 5).

From some interviews, it is clear that the mechanism of these arrivals chain was not working only by family relations, but also by friend or neighborhood relation among different families, above all in a small village like Kafr Saad is, where in the community there are very close contacts.

Thus, a final consideration can be made about the attraction power exerted not just by direct narrations and positive opinions about Italy but also, and probably more effectively, by real symbols of reached wellbeing, for example the house. Indeed, from the quoted interviews it was found that, a part from realistic valuations about opportunities in Italy, in the occurrence provoking large migration, the most powerful factor pushing people to leave was the huge Darwish's brother building. As already learnt by other studies on migration, the power of television and images in starting emigration processes is remarkable. The example of Kafr's Egyptian living in Sesto shows that, for people who left, further important migration processes elements are the success boast and showing off and, for those remaining home, the fantasy of success and emulation spirit.

2. TRANSNATIONALISM OF THE MIGRATORY PROJECT

2.1 The Original context. From the migration project setting up to the departure

The origin families interviewed in rural context present quite similar socio-demographic characteristics. It refers to quite numerous families (usually from 4 to 7 children) whose father has in many instances a civil service job, usually poorly paid (gardener, land-surveyor, engineer for agriculture, cleaning worker) and/or an agricultural job (usually in small plot of ground, often inherited) with an average income around 200-400 E.£., more or less 25-50 €. ³⁰

If in rural context this form of double activity is very common (employee/worker and farmer), and as consequence of integrated income, among families of migrants coming from the capital Bahna more differentiated jobs can be find: in one case the father was a taxi-driver, in others self-employments, freelance activities (accountant) or enterprising activities (marble seller shop, car washing workshop) are identified; in one instance, eventually, the father, nowadays retired, was the sheikh of a mosque. Even among migrants coming from others governorates (5 out of 17 interviewed in Italy) was noticed a similar casuistry: prevalence of farming jobs in the countryside and white-collar jobs in the cities (Tanta, Mansura, Alexandria and Cairo). Women, apart from exceptions (employed in family small trading enterprises, music teachers), usually do not have any paid occupation and they work at home or in family properties. In several cases the father had already died at interview time.

What seems to be shared both from countryside and cities families is that they are not poor or under the poverty threshold but, are large families, as already underlined by IOM and the *Italian Cooperation* in their researches done in Egypt ³¹, that make many efforts to sustain maintenance expenses, school fairs and reproduction of their young members.

Migrants' brothers are usually in their school age or are university students. At interview time, they were in some cases doing their compulsory military service (varying from 1 to 3 years according to the reached school level) or had informal employments. Less frequently, they worked in private enterprises (transport, tourism) or in governmental offices, sometimes had a qualified job (English teacher). On the contrary, when the interviewed had older brothers, they often worked abroad or in other areas of the country: among the interviewed in Sesto San Giovanni, in three instances it was found that an older brother had already migrated to Italy, in two they went to the Persian Gulf area, another one to Canada and eventually in tourist sites of their own country (Sharm el-Sheikh, Hurgada).

Parents' education level is usually rather low when they come from the countryside (sometimes they have not even received any basic training and are illiterate); it is definitely much higher when they come from urban areas (secondary school level or diploma, sometimes academic degree). Naturally, educated families exist even in the villages around Bahna but the increase of education and in general, of the cultural estate occurred in the shift from parents' generation to migrants' or migrants' brothers one is evident. This increase has obviously something to do with the natural internal dynamics of education improvement but, it has also something to do with migration dynamics: even if many rural families had the possibility to let their children go to school even before one or more than one of their members' expatriation, often migrants' remittances themselves granted the outliving of the family notwithstanding the presence of children who were studying and were therefore not able to provide any relevant income.

³⁰ GDP given by the *Human Development in the Governorates* in Kafr Saad is of 2.249 E.£. for the year 2000/2001, which at purchase power parity (PPP) expressed in US dollars is 1442,4 \$

³¹ We refer to the 2003 "Contemporary Egyptian Migration" research (please download from www.emigration.gov.eg/publications/Publications.asp) in which migrants family units come out to be more numerous compared to the ones of non migrants

Concentrating on Kafr Saad, it is proper to underline that the village offers particular administrative and social conditions: referring to the absence of a civil authority ('Omda) and of a village association, which on the contrary does exist in other villages of the area. These two institutions, existing in the past, have disappeared in the last years: after last 'Omda's death (whose two sons cannot succeed him because the first has migrated to Italy and the second is not in condition to wield the position) no one, having the capacities to fulfill such a task, has ever showed the will to do it. As per the Local Development Association (*gama'ya at-tanmia*) none of our interviewed has given us information about its dissolution. Besides, it is necessary to point out that Qalyubiya Governorate is known as light drugs (*Bango*) traffic and abuse area and the abuse and sell rate among young people is high even in Kafr Saad, this implies therefore, constant police presence.

However, although this lack of recognized and official local authority, the local community seems strongly marked by the "mass expatriation" occurred in the last 10-15 years and regarding especially young man in their working age. Under this point of view the village seems deprived of its best power, with few occupational perspectives on site, except those generated by the remittances in buildings construction and in sporadic and small trading enterprises and therefore even more strongly bound to the financial resources coming from migrants. As mentioned afterward (chapter 3), under the economic and social point of view the most evident effects of expatriation and migrants' remittances flows seem mainly to concern, on one hand, the building and handicraft activities improved by the buildings erected by the migrants' families and, on the other, the rise of instruction level of young, whose school career and formation is granted by migrated family members' remittances. It is relevant to mark out, however, that the rise of family units' standards of living and consumption, and the resulting money availability even for children, has also caused a more widespread drug abuse and pushing by some local teenagers.

As already pointed out in the previous CeSPI's researches on Egyptians in Italy, even in Bahna area emigration is strongly male and female presence is still bound to family reunion processes. Usually, among family members, the older brother is the first to leave, followed by the second and so on up to the younger brother (once they have ended school and fulfilled military service). There are some exceptions: when the older brother already enjoys a permanent job (teacher or ministerial employment), when he can not leave (for example when he has motory problems) or if he is too old.

In any case it is remarkable that as migration processes develops and side effects of migration become more and more effective during the years, the rigid chronological order of departures based on sons' age, tends to get weaker and to leave more room to consideration of different types. When it is still the family unit and the father's authority to determine migration dynamics, the most skilled son may be chosen (according to his aptitude, his linguistic and working abilities) or the most willing to leave or (in one instance) the one explicitly requested by the older brother already in Italy. This could mean that a deeper knowledge of the Italian context, in particular of its working opportunities and social conditions, leads families to better select the future migrants also according to the characteristics of the context, rather than to age only. Moreover, recently migrants come to Sesto before the army's call, just to elude the military service (according to the Egyptian Law, the resident abroad is dispensed from military service if he comes back to Egypt after his 32nd birthday). This brought to a drop in the average age of Egyptian migrants to Sesto, and partly of the educational qualifications they have.

As per the instruction levels, in any case, the impression of a migrant with fairly good qualification seems to get stronger: 7 out of the 17 interviewed in Sesto San Giovanni had ended university, 8 had high school diploma, while only 2 had ended secondary school. From these data it is already clear that the average age of surveyed migrants at their arrival to Italy is around 25.

As far as the **familiar nature of the migratory strategy** is concerned, the developed multi-sides research gave the possibility to get in touch with the two migration dimensions and brought to an

interesting, but still partial, shift of information. If seen from the destination point, migrant's decision to leave sometimes looks like the development of an essentially personal project, almost always agreed with the family but, in any case, arose from a personal initiative. Even if the casuistry is relatively heterogeneous (from familiar emergency situations in which the older brother has no other choice than leave, to relatively well off leaving conditions in which emigration looks totally volunteer and optional), the interviewed have often asserted the autonomy of their migratory fate notwithstanding family's impositions and pressure.

On the Egyptian side, on the other hand, even if the decision to leave is also here presented as a migrant's individual choice, a strong influence by the family was found out, which takes direct action since the beginning selling holdings, land, animals and, in some cases, mortgaging the house in order to allow the expatriation and later (this theme will be discussed in chapter 3) influencing the migratory project of relatives abroad.

As a matter of fact, migrants alone can seldom afford the expenses of the expatriation and the family is almost always the main source of the necessary means to leave and their primary role is also apparent when they are forced to try to receive money from people not belonging to the family unit. In these cases, the father himself looks after the money collection, both from private subject or from banks.

Let alone families' tendency to underline their link with the migrated member and the migrants' tendency to underline their emancipation progress (more or less effective), it is conceivable to affirm that the migrant seldom leaves free from family's investments, responsibilities and expectations. It is also possible to point out that even if this migration project matrix based on family changes during the years according to the different acclimatization phases, it is always present in expatriate's life. On migrant's hand the link with his family unit does not disappear once he has given back the money used at the beginning, on the family one, a long term project based on the expectations arisen before the leaving seems to persist and to be confirmed: through planned exploitation of the remittances sent by the member living in Italy the family will be able to pay off its debts, to own a house, to let family members marry and eventually invest possible money surplus. His plan never has urgency features: relatives perfectly know it is unlikely that at the beginning the migrant will be able to send money, being squeezed by the debts contracted for the expatriation and employment and housing necessities. In this first phase, on the contrary, families often offer the migrant extra money for first expenses and housing. Later, however, helping relatives living in the homeland is considered a duty: "*It isn't a must but it's the right thing to do*". Namely it is a must intrinsic to the leaving. When this duty is not fulfilled, relationship with the family does not stop but worsen. In any case, it is relevant to point out that in only two instances the lack of fulfillment was recorded.

Migratory project transitoriness is transmitted by the migrant's family, always presenting migration as a temporary solution even if stay period tends to widen out more and more. Although the interviewed acknowledge their migrated relatives' full choosing freedom ("*You live where you find something to eat*"), general hope is that who has left can come back, or that his links with Egypt, with his homeland culture and with his family remain strong among years. In fact many private and social migrants' actions lead to this hope: marriage with kinsmen or inside the village; widening of the family house; sharing charitable actions with direct benefits to the village, etc...

Family implication in migrant's migration project can in any case have different forms varying its intensity through years according to the family itself. As shown in the chapter dedicated to remittances and investments, the family affects and shares the administration of migrant's remittances and party manages first investments.

Motivations of departures usually correspond to those traditionally presented and studied in migration literature: economic motivation, attractive power of the nets, emulation, urgency of needs generated by migrations themselves (for example the remarkable rise of land price or the rise of money you usually

should have to get married – *mahr*, let alone the spread of consumption goods). In Egyptian migration but also in the majority of contemporary migration flows, a clear prevalence of the economic dimension, due to the attempt to save money more rapidly and more efficiently than allowed by the few opportunities (where available) of the homeland, was underlined. Bearing this approach to migration in mind, aiming to a "quick" economic success, it is possible however, to point out some additional features. Ignoring for the time being the analysis on the medium-long term evolutions of the starting motivations which characterize the first expatriation (they will be analyzed later), and concentrating on the departure space-temporal features, experienced in the origin land (by those who look after the expatriation and by relatives remaining in Egypt), it is possible to state that the representation of the current stay abroad is based on a temporary migration, basically aiming to the quickening and to the realization of the family reproductive cycle. In fact, the most pushing reason for expatriation is the need of setting down one's own life and that of brothers' and sisters', which is the creation of better existential chances for new generations. It means that emigration is seen by the one who is leaving and by his family, as a short-lived means to shorten the time needed to fulfill fundamental homeland society's expectations: getting married, the wedding itself, savings availability (in order to grant outliving and to start a possibly paying economic enterprise). These conditions have been confirmed also by the interviews to potential migrants underwent in Qalyubiya.

On this generalized and socially shared substratum, actually personal existential investments can be set up: some of the migrants interviewed in Sesto San Giovanni stressed the desire of experiencing different life styles, the will to make experience in Europe, to pursuit innovation and new motivations, to learn new languages, way of working and thinking. Under this point of view, migration is also seen as a path leading to personal growth and psychological and economic independence yet without letting the outcomes of this emancipation from the means of sustenance provided by the father, to a separation from the family universe. It is therefore the pursuit of a wider form of independence still bound to the kinship ties which are not cut off. As far as the literally economic investments are concerned, please read in the following chapter (chapter 3) the description of the enterprising processes occurring inside and outside the family.

Seen this willingness to the pursuit of remunerated working experiences and personal growth possibilities, Italy seems a logic and partly assuring destination: in fact, Italy is considered close to Egypt, geographically and socially, where it is possible to live, for a limited period, also without documents and where there is already a net one can count on for welcome and first support.

Essentially, once abolished the institution of the *sponsorship* through the introduction of the Bossi-Fini Law, regular **departures** occur under invitation of the family member already in Italy, or through family reunion permission given to one's wife or close relatives. Another possibility is to reach another European country regularly and then move to Italy exploiting the free mobility right granted by Schengen Treaty.

In these last years the progressing closing of European borders has raised the number of irregular departures. As far as irregular departures are concerned, different typologies have been found:

Job contracts trade - invites trade - false documents/visa trade - land/sea journey and irregular entry. Even if these aspects were not deeply studied, from some of the interviews it was possible to get hints about the difficulties, the duration and the human and economic cost of the "long way round" migrants had to sustain. In spite of the well-known sea journeys and the night landings, thanks to the media, the most exploited route among Sesto San Giovanni migrants is the land one, both through Turkey (usually reached by plane as the entry is often easier when compared to other European countries one) with illegal entry from the Slovenian border, or through Ukraine (reached by plane), another destination that, through other East Europe countries, allows illegal entry in Italy from the eastern border. In some of the visited rural villages, the explicit reference to Libya as present transit country was recorded.

Particularly, in one of these villages it was said that, at the time of the interviews were made, more or less 100 young men belonging to that village were in Libya waiting for departure and, that the week before, two brothers (always coming from that village) had died during a shipwreck.

Irregular departure expenses floats around an average amount of 40.000/50.000 E.P., more or less 5.000/6.500 €. If the destination are the United States prices are higher, up to 75.000 E.P. (more or less 9.500 €) and the entry usually occurs through Brazil or Mexico.

During the **collection of the money needed for the departure**, many factors, often linked one to the other, play significant roles; they have been summed up as follows:

- socio-economic family condition (on sale holdings availability, savings, rejection of the bank loan solution for religious reasons [usury]);
- period (the historical time when departure occurs, it directly influences the possibility to leave legally and its costs);
- presence of family members abroad: most of last departures, having high costs, can be afforded only thanks to the economic help given by the family member already expatriated. While the first leaving family member can count on his father's savings (if he works on his own too), on family holdings and animals sell, on loans obtained inside the village or, in some cases, obtained from the bank, younger brothers count on the economic help given by the expatriated brother. Moreover, the presence of a relative in the destination country, who usually charges himself with the first expenses of newly arrived, allows "cheaper" departures;
- origin place (countryside or city): it usually leads to different money collection strategies in the first departure instance (more strongly linked to land sell in the case of rural extraction);
- departure features (regular or irregular).

In any case, the sum needed to the departure is usually collected among the net of family relationships: it can be directly provided by the father (savings, holdings sell) or reached through the contribution of many relatives, or through the remittance of the expatriated relative. When money must be asked out of the family context, it is always the father who looks after the credit thanks to personal and professional contacts, which allows him to obtain loans under different forms (salary anticipation, free work, bank loans, loans from neighbours or friends).

Loan repayment is the migrant's absolute priority. Among the Egyptian interviewed in Italy volunteer arrearage forms or evasion from restitution obligations have never been found. Regarding to migrant's family, there isn't any relevant information about creditors' strong pressure (a part from banks) for the restitution of the sum in the expected time and, in the occasions of lack of payment found, it was the family who charged itself for the credit balance. Finally, it was not found, nor in Egypt or in Sesto San Giovanni, evidence of debts with the smuggling net.

2.2 Arrival, acquaintance of and settlement in the Italian context

As seen in the part dedicated to the migratory chain phenomenon between Kafr Saad and Sesto San Giovanni, since the arrival of the very first migrants, essential conditions for **first assistance** came into being. Given the low number of housing and of Egyptians themselves, at the beginning the 1990 migrants' flow had to find support in the nearby Milan, exploiting friends' contacts living in other places too:

When I arrived (in 1990) I went to live at some Bahna friends' in Milan, I worked for one year for an Italian cleaning company where my friends worked too; then I got married and I started to work in another cleaning company managed by an Egyptian (A. int. 1).

As from other interviews, from this one, it is immediately clear the roles played by fellow countrymen: material support and first assistance, linguistic and social mediation with new context, relationship information and resources, concrete job opportunities.

These resources, or in other words the group's social inner capital³², are both the protective and propulsive structure in the new milieu, where simple sharing of ethnic or national origin grants first assistance and opportunities of social acclimatization otherwise difficult to enjoy. In the Egyptian case different forms and levels of these nets operation are identified. In some instances the role of strong social nets (relatives) defining migratory processes is fully confirmed³³: departure, destination, housing, job, these are all matters decided in accordance with the relative already settled down:

When I arrived I went to sleep at my brother's: I went to work in the company managed by a very good fellow of Sharkyia he worked in too (M. int. 7).

Be it brother, cousin or uncle, in these cases the process of acquaintance with the new milieu occurs through the mediation of a strong reference, even if relations inside the family unit not always grant, in the same time, effective support and full autonomy, oscillating between help and exploitation:

I had an uncle, he was my father's brother, who had been living here since 1990; I arrived in 1996 and came here at my uncle's house in Sesto. It was both a lucky and unlucky thing. He asked a favour of me: "You work in my (cleaning) company, I house you, but you do not have to ask for any money till I get married". I thought it was something that was going to last a couple of months, it lasted two years and a half, he did not give me anything (...) He kept me this way, exploiting a boy without experience, obliging him to work for free (M. int. 10).

Even friend's nets come out to be very meaningful: who is going to plan his new life in a stranger land finds here very effective forms of help and solidarity:

In 1994, when I arrived, my friend had lived in Italy for three years; we had kept in touch by phone, I watched his cassettes, we talked: it was a very strong friendship. He worked in a cleaning company, two days after my arrival I was already working because he knew the Egyptian boss, he introduced me to the work, he gave me a moped as present, he borrowed me a million liras, he gave me suggestions... My cousin too helped me but my friend did more (Y. int. 16).

However solidarity and support dynamics between old and new migrants may work, nearly always only fellow countrymen's help favours first job and housing opportunities; moreover the first introduction in the Italian context is always mitigated by fellow countrymen's influence. The Egyptian community was defined as a *non-community network*, where national belonging is often reduced to local belonging, "that creates weak ethnic nets, where social capital useful to both working introduction and housing dimensions can be found"³⁴.

As the Egyptian presence in Sesto San Giovanni grows and gets stronger, the relations net available widens and differs so that the latest arrived is offered a larger housing and working choice opportunity: some of the interviewed people clearly asserted they had to value the house they were going to live in, the people they were going to live with (fellow travellers, people from the same village or city dwellers, cousins or friends). From the poor information it was found that, apart from sporadic cases of

³² With this category we mean the entire reserve of values, trust, reciprocity information that allow group's reproduction and the access to living opportunities strategic to the migrant. Cf. Barbieri, P. 1996 "Non c'è rete senza nodi. Il ruolo del capitale sociale nel processo di incontro tra domanda e offerta di lavoro", *Stato e Mercato*, nr. 1, pages 96-112; Coleman, J. 1988. "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital", *American Journal of Sociology*, nr. 94, pages 176-192.

³³ As already described in the case of Egyptians by Ambrosini and Abbatecola (Cf. Ambrosini, M., Abbatecola, E., 2002. "Reti di relazione e percorsi di inserimento lavorativo degli stranieri: l'imprenditorialità egiziana a Milano", in A. Colombo, G. Sciortino, a cura di, *Stranieri in Italia. Assimilati ed esclusi*, Il Mulino, Bologna).

³⁴ Ambrosini, Abbatecola, op. cit., p. 211

personal incompatibility and obviously, apart from migrants with family, Kafr Saad expatriates share the house and tend to stay unite. Generally speaking, place of origin is still a factor of living aggregation even because, it often corresponds to parental, friendship or neighbourhood ties already present in Egypt; in any case the ties and relations created in Italy can lead to the reset of Sesto San Giovanni Egyptian flats composition.

As far as job is concerned, situations differ more; the higher number of bonds and the complexity of circumstances strongly influence the creation of groups based on the place of origin. On one hand, relatives' and friends' mediation is essential for first job search success, on the other, as settlement process develops, worker's contacts net widens and gives him the possibility to select between more working options. Under this point of view he less strongly suffers the influence of those who came before him and he self-exploits social nets in order to reach better working conditions: place of origin, yet important, becomes merely an influencing factor in the working areas where Egyptians are more likely to be found. As it will be shown in the next chapter, the introduction of Egyptians in Milan work reality, both as subordinate and freelancers, is concentrated in the building, cleaning, retail trade and catering sectors and Sesto San Giovanni is no exception (concierge too is a job more ad more found). In the companies managed by Egyptians (that are growing in number) it is easy to find workers sharing the same origin (same village or region), but professional needs or deliberate choices can lead Egyptian bosses to the engagement of workers coming from other regions or countries.

It seems Egyptian entrepreneurs played a significant role in the 1998 and 2001-2002 **regularization process** giving many of their fellow countrymen the possibility to possess the working contract needed for the residence permit. Among the interviewed people in Sesto San Giovanni, apart from a boy with double nationality (his mother is Italian and his father arrived to Italy in the 70's) 6 out of the 15 remaining obtained the permit thanks to Egyptian entrepreneurs, 8 thanks to Italian employers reached through fellow countrymen's help, the case left thanks to a Rome's association. It is however important to underline that Egyptian entrepreneurs' implication in regularization processes was not always clear and fair, free from hidden aims as the Italians' one; still it is meaningful that several channels leading to the final target of migrant's first phase are now available inside the community.

Once the legal residence documents are obtained, the **stabilization process** begins and migrants' paths partly differ. Sometimes regular condition allows them to emancipate from Egyptian employers to some degree and to get into local working fields: it seems therefore to be the possibility to get free from fellow-countrymen's group. In most cases, otherwise, regular condition allows the migrant a quieter research for better working conditions inside the Egyptian companies' circuit. In any case appreciable differences between legal and illegal status were not noticed: working and occupational sectors remain the same, apart from the rare cases in which the regular Egyptian worker is engaged by a non-building industrial company.

On the Egyptian front, regarding working introduction ways and sectors in Italy, it have been noticed that the family not only has quite a precise idea of what the family member is doing in Italy, but also knows the working sectors their countrymen are usually in: cleaning, building, and catering. At migrant's departure, neither he nor his family knows the job he is going to do, even if they can imagine it is likely going to be in these sectors. It is interesting to point out that an occupation in the cleaning field is socially accepted because it is run abroad, far from neighbour's eye and well paid: this would not happen at home, especially on account of the Egyptian salary. Many migrants leave without former working experience and this affects, as later exposed, the possibility to have or not a bank account. Only in the building field a constant working introduction has been found, both in Egypt and in Italy. With regular residence status, the stabilization process in the arrival context gets simpler for the most lucky or skilled and brings improvements right on the two features so important at the beginning: house and job.

House purchase in Sesto San Giovanni comes out to be quite common among Egyptians: seven who had already obtained a bank loan and had their own house have been interviewed; other two were looking for a loan and for the right flat, while in one case the loan was already asked without success. House purchase comes from several, still often coexisting, motivations: wife's (and sometimes also children's) arrival and therefore the expectation of family life in Italy too; rent costs higher than loan ones and the convenience of an expense for acquisition rather than mere usufruct; real estate investment attraction, considered a middle-long term economically good choice; the wish of personal quiet, if compared with life with other owners or live-in partners. A real estate purchase, on one hand proves a sort of acclimatization to the arrival society, the entry in local trust and exchange circuits and the presence of actual ties to the host country (this is the instance of self-run enterprises too), on the other hand, it doesn't necessarily mean that there is the intention to definitely settle down in Italy, exactly because of the different motivations above mentioned (the house can serve many present or future purposes: the sale when definitive departure is decided or the rent and the possibility to have a income in Euros in Egypt).

The second improvement of a settled migrant can be the start of an enterprise of their own. (This aspect is going to be here briefly analysed from the social point of view, a wider analysis, from the economic and entrepreneurial one, will be presented in chapter 3). The start of a building or cleaning company testifies that the immigrant can now deal with administrative and institutional aspects of the Italian society (V.A.T. number opening, Chamber of Commerce registration, chartered accountant resort, agreements with banks) but is also fundamental in order to deepen his knowledge of the Italian milieu. Without contacts with other competing companies, with simple local dwellers or technicians (land-surveyors, doorkeepers and administrators, craftsmen) there will not be the social and working conditions to start the enterprise. The situation for Egyptian restaurants, Islamic butcher shops, phone centres is different because of the mainly foreigner clientele.

As far as the chosen enterprise is concerned, it is not possible to set a ready-reference between enterprise and definite stabilization because of the motivations above mentioned, that is to say the different projects and strategies linked to the enterprise itself, discussed later).

It's important to point out even the peculiarity of **interaction with the host society**: relations with the local milieu are run through personal contacts that can be either direct or mediated by fellow-countrymen but always remain strongly individual. Neither presence of any type of association nor forms of representative or action bodies among Egyptian migrants have ever been found. As already underlined in studies on Egyptians in the Milanese context³⁵, Egyptian immigrants' gradual social and working settlement has not brought to either official or informal constitution of structured corporate entities, both regarding the home country (village associations, collective investment forms) or the host country (ethnic-national local associations, professional associations, entrepreneurs' unions). A researcher that was investigating on behalf of Sesto San Giovanni's commune, complained about the difficulty to identify, among Egyptians, a recognized representative able to lead a dialogue between local institutions and the entire community (int. to G.B.); the local bank's managers (Credito Cooperativo di Sesto San Giovanni) faced the same problem (int. to A.M.). In the area where the research took place, there are not associations working directly on the migratory field.

On the Egyptian end, the only associations migrants interact with are the religious ones (*gamaiyat al-khairiya*), that are linked more to charity than to economic and social development concepts. In general there is not community life, this lack being justified by the conviction that "if you want something done, you'd better do it by yourself". There are two exceptions: Kafr el-Gamal case, which will be

³⁵ Besides the already mentioned study by Ambrosini and Abbatecola, reference is from researches published in the work edited by Chiesi and Zucchetti on immigrants' Lombard entrepreneurship (C.f. M. Chiesi, E. Zucchetti, edited by, 2003. *Immigrati imprenditori. Il contributo degli extracomunitari allo sviluppo della piccola impresa lombarda*, Egea, Milan).

deeply analysed in the last chapter, and a single migrant's experience. Migrants take part to the activities of the religious associations both before the homecoming and during the stay in Italy. In this second instance, money requests start from the village and reach the population abroad, through the voice of family members. It is interesting to point out that none of the interviewed has acknowledged the promotive and innovative role played by migrants as migrants themselves, and underline that there is no direct relation between the host country economic success and the level of participation to community life. Even if strong associations are not to be found either on the territory or among migrants in the host country, there can be social solidarity phenomena among migrants coming from the same village or area.

In conclusion, as far as the arrival milieu concerned, a fairly good level of Egyptian migrants' individual acclimatization was found in the working context, where relations with Italians are described as positive, simplified by similar social and cultural features (importance of family relations, of informal practices for job access and fulfilment, of approach to the working duty) and by professional and economic cooperation relations in which, Egyptians experience working and interaction practices that seem to work quite well, considering the functional point of view.

As far as friendships and relations outside the working context are concerned, in their free time migrants seldom meet Italians. However meaningful exceptions of inter-ethnic relations can be found in specific circles: relations coming from bar or other meeting places patronage, from neighbourhood or school activities (when all the family is involved), from doorkeeping or cleaning activities in blocks.

2.3 Migrant's relations with the home country

In this paragraph the relations the migrant has with the home context will be analysed, taking into consideration the affective and the social dimension, leaving the economic one to the following chapter. From Italy, the relation with the homeland seem to have mainly family features: the ties with relatives seem to play the primary role in keeping the migrant bound to the departure context; the belonging to the community, to social or professional bodies, or the love to their country seem not to be less important.

The affective, psychological, and "planning" link with the family, strongly influences Egyptian migrants' life, especially in the first phase of their living abroad, when loan repayment, house building/restruction and wedding are primary needs. This first phase, which is nearly compulsory and, is to be found in almost all the migratory experiences in Sesto San Giovanni, tells us that migration still comes from and depends on the Egyptian context and, that its fruits are immediately moved to the home land. Usually even after the first phase has ended the family enjoys the help given by migrants abroad: help for younger brothers' or sisters' wedding, forms of presents, remittances. Still the period before migrant's marriage is usually the most involving in his home village's life. Having found so few cases in which migrants married an Italian woman³⁶, and saw in some cases, their automatic acceptance of an Egyptian wife known by their family, it is possible to suppose that cultural, religious, family and social elements continue to play a significant role in the marriage decision. Once married, the migrant will intensify his economic support to the family if his wife remains in Egypt (often creating two different channels of economic help, one for his parents, one for his wife and children) or will inevitably reduce it if the woman reaches him in Italy. Generally speaking ties remain strong and the family is still, both a non-negligible commitment (efforts to allow brothers' and sisters' wedding in Egypt is proof of that) and a structure one can count on when difficult decisions must be taken, for example the decision to send back to Egypt wife and children; the research both on Italian and

³⁶ Previous CeSPI's researches have already underlined that mixed marriages were to be found especially among the migrants coming from urban areas and from medium-high social extraction, who arrived in Italy during the '70s.

Egyptian ground showed that this practice is not so unusual and that, it is linked to several practical (like in case of the following interview), educational and religious considerations:

I gain 1.550 € and it is not good, really, because I use them all to live here with my family: 750 € for the rent, there is the car and the petrol and particular expenses for the baby. You know something? I was thinking about sending my wife back to Egypt for some months so some friends can come at my place to live, they will help for the rent and I will spare some money so when my wife and baby come back they will find something (G. int. 5)

This passage shows that the family remains an essential affective and practical polarity in the transnational projects of many Egyptians abroad, and that acts as interface to migrants' life and projects. This lasting welding between migrant and family is shown also when the relatives understand and respectfully accept any interruption of money flow due, for example, to the rise of expenses caused by the arrival of wife and/or children; the starting of a self-employed activity. They know that this interruption is short-lived and that it serves higher family targets (higher economic affluence, jobs for other expatriating family members).

The number of **telephone contacts** between the two ends reliably indicates the strength of transnational ties with the family. In Sesto San Giovanni phone centres are always crowded and the people interviewed, apart from one particular case, asserted that they phoned frequently home (three or four times a week, everyday if they had wife in Egypt).

According to the information received in Qalyubiya villages, the family is in touch with the member abroad nearly every day by phone, often installed after son's departure or using the village phone centre. Communications tend to be regular and have a relatively high frequency (most of the interviewed said that they talked with their relatives once a day). The telephone is used primarily to reassure family about one's own condition and situation. Generally the migrant calls while the family do it in urgent cases or because the migrant has not informed them about him for a too long time. In some cases, sending mobile sms substitutes daily phone communications. In few cases the interest for the host country encouraged the installation of dish antennas in Egypt to see Italian programmes, it is rather the contrary: migrants in Italy watch Arab programmes and comment on them by phone with relatives in Egypt. Some asserted that orientating the antenna towards the European satellite does not comply with local morality and religion.

Families express their will of the migrant to keep relations with the home land alive especially through marriage (possibly with a woman from the same village or related by blood), house building and religious practices fulfilment. As already highlighted, most interviewed migrants' families declared that their relative married or was going to marry a woman from the same village.

When migrants come back, ties with the family and the local context are strengthened of course.

Temporary come-backs usually happen during summer holiday or during *Ramadan* month, according to migrant's holidays allowance in Italy. The period between migration and first come-back is usually the longest, with an average varying from two to four years (sometimes because of long documents obtaining process). Later come-back are more regular, once or twice a year and usually last three or four weeks. In this period the migrant has holiday (he visits friends or relatives, goes to the seaside) but, if he is the head of the family, these days are used check and plan building or modernizing works or to carry out investments. During come-backs, wedding promises are made official and weddings are celebrated.

Here migrants bring with them not only money, but also presents for all the enlarged family such as clothes, toys, Hi-Fi, Play Station, etc...

Most of **definitive come-backs** originate from migrant's will to stay with his family. Following the reunion in Italy, more than once it has been noticed that, sons with their mother went back to Egypt once reached school age; some years later the father too left Italy. In Kafr Saad many women and young who had experienced migration to Italy (due to reunion processes) and who came back following the plan just described (sometimes not completely carried out as the husband still had not come back) or following personal choices (temporary come-back turned to definitive come-back) were found.

As far as definitive come-backs is concerned, sometimes it was found that, following single member's or entire family unit's come-back (supposed to be definitive), projects failure or further money needs can lead to new departures.

Come-back reasons correspond to "socio-familiar motivations", as migration literature labelled them: need to live with the family who have gone back to Egypt for cultural and religious reasons (economic ones exist but are often unmentioned); wish to enjoy an increased economic position reached through emigration and exploitable in the home land; health and mental problems. Most of these can be included in "return to conservatism" cases as Cerase defines them: Ammassari and Black explain that, these people emigrated pursuing a specific target and that, in order to fulfil it have sent remittances and saved money (often a large part of their earnings) during their stay abroad³⁷. Home society values continue to play the most important role estimating one's own success and social achievements. These targets are of primary importance even for the interviewed potential migrants, as already pointed out. Still, this is not the right sitting for come-back theoretic investigation, which is an integrating part of the migratory process and which has been revised during years by migration literature. Among the interviewed Egyptian repatriates, was noticed a strong attachment to the home context once they have returned, that is to say that they get closer to the values that identify and characterise the home village/country. This is true both for rural and city context and is generally expressed through evidence of coherence with traditional values and wealth showing off: house modernization and improvement and land purchase.

As will be explained in the paragraph dedicated to investments, the actions that demonstrate wealth, come from a process which started before the come-back and which is strongly mediated by family and home context. The sharing such values and the necessity of showing it clearly, sometimes brought to strong interior conflicts and to ex-post evaluation of the choices already taken.

Still it is important to underline that, unlike other massive migration contexts, wealth showing off seldom exceeds into open and arrogant manifestation, i.e. expensive cars purchase or important economic activities starting. According to migrants, corruption, lack of protection from local authorities' interference and abuse of power advise a "low profile" come-back that, as it will be shown later, orientates the choice of investments and their location. While among migrants who came back to rural contexts relationships with Italy considerably weakened or disappeared, the situation in Bahna is lightly different. Here were found migrants who, in spite of the come-back based on continuity they have chosen (many has taken over the activity the family already had before their departure), keep relations with Italy alive especially through television (news and variety shows); relations with people; starting of trade activities involving the skills and also the customers the Italian experience provided; maintenance personal relations' networks (in some cases relative relations) embarked in Italy or developed prior the departure or developed in Egypt thanks a common migratory experience.

However, returns among those who expatriated in the '80s are rather unusual at the time being and many of the people interviewed in Sesto San Giovanni were sceptical about concrete possibilities of definitive come-back.

³⁷ Actually any rigid definition risks being partial or unfitting to catch peculiarities and gradations any come-back offers.

Especially those who started a self-employed activity in Italy, believed they were far from this prospect, both under the time and the economic point of view. On one hand their self-employed activity was so demanding that they had no mental energies left to concentrate on other places, inevitably getting farer and farer as per familiarity and everyday life concerned; on the other hand home country general conditions were not considered sufficiently safe, interesting and promising, under the entrepreneur point of view, to let them choose the Egyptian activity to the detriment of the Italian one.

It is interesting to underline that the idea of delegating part of the business management in the future, is making its way especially among those who have a self-employed activity: this will allow them longer periods in Egypt and Italy will become the location of job and most investments, while Egypt the location dedicated to holidays, family and subsistence activities.

At present it is impossible to count on an extensive quantitative survey on Egyptian migrants' disposition to definitive come-back and to express a conclusive and sure opinion, as would be needed a new survey. It was said that, among potential migrants, the migration plan seems to follow the traditional one towards the gulf area, being therefore temporary supposed. However, the Egyptian migrants interviewed in Italy, seem to have an exactly opposite vision of their migration project or, at least, to consider possible evolutions and changes. The time needed to working integration in Italy gets longer but at the same time time requiring, still economic success promising options arise (particularly through the creation of a self-employed activity after a more or less long period of employment period). When the time needed to definitive come-back gets longer, social and private actions to favour it are undertaken (first of all the marriage with a woman from the same village) but, some of the interviewed used rather dubitative and ambivalent words speaking about their will to go back home. Many suggest temporary come-backs, whose length is hoped to get longer and longer, as migratory experience will allow enterprise management from both the Italian and the Egyptian side. So an "open come-back" model stands out, a model that is not characterised by strong tendency towards come-back or stay, but that seems to be heavily influenced by family choices, by judgements and decisions linked to ties and opportunities that can develop in both the host and home context. Cultural and affective judgements melt with practical behaviours due to the economic and financial sphere and give birth to a come-back phenomenology rather wide-ranging and difficult to predict, at least at present. However, three schematic types can be identified:

- a) Seen the (economically) better Italian context, migrants better socially and economically acclimatized, in particular those who have opened self-employed activities and have already undergone family reunion, can choose between definitive stay in Italy or definitive come-back once their active life cycle has ended. In these cases Egypt is seen as the "place of origins", where to go during holidays (as already is happening for the migrants who arrived in Italy in the '70s) or after retirement to.
- b) Other migrants consider the job done in Italy a means to save money which will be transferred to the Egyptian context and, the management and exploitation success of these savings, will determine time and ways of come-backs (which are not intended to be very remote in time). Egypt is still the place where energies and resources are addressed in order to end the active life cycle after an Italian phase and the place where the savings gathered in Italy are effectively reinvested.
- c) The third possible option is the one coming from unforeseen events, not linked to economic plans, which cause a definitive come-back: the periods of stay are upset as emergencies and binding family reasons occur. The affective factor overwhelms the economic one causing an untimely time-back as per practical perspectives concerned (even if not coming from economic failure) but that is nevertheless absolutely necessary as per the existence ones concerned.

3. MIGRANTS' ECONOMIC TRANSNATIONALISM

3.1 Incomes, savings and remittances

Egyptian migrants, as already said, can usually enter the labour market in a reasonably long time thanks to the successful exploitation of the fellow countrymen's network. Usually one or two months are needed to start gaining something and later the income is slowly enhanced. However, at the beginning they often find part-time, occasional and obviously not regular occupations which do not allow large savings. Indeed, sometimes loans from the home country are needed as the Italian income is so low that it does not even let the migrant afford the daily expenses.

In the phase without the residence permit, many migrants work discontinuously in the cleaning sector with Egyptian employers; more constantly in the building one learning the job and therefore with apprentice salary; some have 2-4 hour shifts a day as doorkeepers or seldom wash dishes in restaurants.

During the first period of stay in Italy migrants usually can not afford large remittances and what they send, is primarily addressed to the repayment of the loan contracted for their departure: loan repayment is therefore the first catalyst of the money sent home.

The most skilled, lucky or needy immediately start to fulfil their repayment duty but, many cases were found testifying that beginning difficulties made further loans necessary, especially for those who arrived in the last 5 years. Often, during the first months, it is the family themselves (relatives living in Sesto San Giovanni or the father living in Egypt) or Italian friends who grant the migrant's outliving. So another loan is added to the one for the departure: this loan contracted in the host country is obviously smaller and can be repaid through working performances.

This is a hard period, as migrants describe it, because of its working conditions and salaries (that seldom exceed 5-600 € per month) and because of the psychological burden of using all the money to reset to zero a negative balance; as an interviewed in Sesto San Giovanni said: "You only work to reach the bottom because you are under it". In this phase there is no real saving but only remittances used to fill in the "economic empty space" created in Egypt.

From the information collected through the interviews with migrants' families, it is possible to say that usually house modernizing works (in most cases the first target after loan repayment) start 3 years after departure, the period on average needed to let remittances grow to considerable amount. Sesto's migrants too asserted that between 2 and 4 years were needed to get free from loan repayment and, at the same time, to settle down in Italy and find a better paid job.

As understandable by the following passages, there are cases that do not follow this standard pattern: sometimes no loan was contracted and both migrant and family unit can enjoy economic independence; sometimes the migrant's family is wealthy and there is no need for them to record the amounts given to the migrant, they simply aim at his long term positive outcome, at the respectability and quality of his job.

I could afford the departure by myself, I didn't ask for nothing but if I had to, they (the family) would have given. I want to build my house from A to Z, I don't need my family's help, I want to do it by myself. It's not a matter of money, I left to settle my life, my future. Many people left to help their families because a lot of money is needed to live in Egypt and the jobs you get there aren't well paid (A. int. 3).

I paid the journey by myself but, my father gave me the money to live here without pressures because, once I arrived, I hadn't worked for one year. I arrived with 2.000 US dollars and my father used to send my money every month, 500 € with Western Union or with somebody who was leaving too (...). I had the permit through an Italian, I paid 5.800 €. I asked my father for this money, I told him that that was the last time I did. From then on I always worked well and now I always send money (M. int. 8).

They helped me so much with the money necessary to the departure, as a journey like this is very expensive: my brother, my mother, my father told me "be careful, don't do heavy jobs, you're a teacher, if there's no job for you, you will have your look around for two or three weeks and then you will come back, there is no problem about money, don't stay without eating (S. int. 13).

Even in these more comfortable experiences of migration, however, migrants do not forget to fulfil the migratory plan intrinsic duty: remittances serve many purposes, house and wedding first, but also family's wellbeing, presents and love demonstration. This means that, even when money does not have an immediate value related to family's outliving and wellbeing, it has an affective and symbolic function: it ties relationships, boosts reciprocity and swap, confirms the belonging to the native family community³⁸.

As soon as he can, the migrant tries to send a part of his Italian income to the family to show he is working, that he can look after himself and that he has not forgotten his family.

Once the Italian first acclimatization period has passed (a no-savings period that presents irregular and poor remittances the family can not count on to their wellbeing and economic projects), the migrant gets higher incomes and can therefore afford to send more relevant amounts. According to many migrants' voices, these savings are respectfully and strategically managed by the family, who basically assign them to the family's and expatriate's house. According to the migrants who live in Sesto San Giovanni, an amount between 200 and 600 Euros out of an average 900-1.000 Euros salary is usually sent to Egypt. Here the family looks after their members' necessary expenses (primary goods; school; furniture and electric household appliances for sisters' marriages) still concentrating substantial part of the savings sent to the real estate property, building or (more often) modernizing the family house, which almost always is the migrant's house too. Those who have a regular salary usually send regular remittances, with monthly or even longer terms, as money can be sent with people re-entering the country.

From the families' point of view, remittances are irregular and the period between one remittance and the other varies according to the circumstances. While no family interviewed in Egypt asserted they monthly received amounts of money, but the information collected in Sesto San Giovanni seem to confirm exactly the contrary. When it comes to establish how much migrants send, it was very hard to collect information from the protagonists and the sums indicated vary according to the person interviewed. People are not willing to make known the exact amount received and answers are usually elusive. According to the interviews carried out in Egypt, sent remittances oscillate between more or less 2.000 € (150-200 € sent every 2 or 3 months) and 8.000-10.000 € per year (money brought with by the migrant himself during temporary stays in the home country is obviously included).

Remittances forwarding channels are often informal, unofficial: fellow countrymen temporarily going back home are entrusted with the money.

Once the family is informed, they will take contact with the migrant/courier and send someone to take the money even if the location is quite far away. This method perfectly works in places, such as Sesto San Giovanni, that host many expatriates from the same area but, it can be uneasy for a migrant coming from a place that do not count a high number of people who left to Milan, as relatives are forced to undergo exacting trips. Another limit is set by the amount of money given to the acquaintance: it can not exceed a certain threshold, as problems at customs and money forfeiture can occur, given the fact

³⁸ On affective and moral feature of money see the 1989 M. Bloch and J. Parry's essay "Money and the Morality of Exchange" in *Money and the Morality of Exchange* (edited by) J. Parry and M. Bloch, Cambridge University Press; on specific feature linked to remittances see L. Goldring 2003 *Re-thinking Remittances: Social and Political Dimensions of Individual and Collective Remittances*, Cerlac, Working Paper Series, February

that the travelling person, besides his own savings, has other fellow countrymen's shares with him. In any case this is the most used way by the Egyptians of Sesto San Giovanni; only in emergency cases bank channels, post or private agencies services are used. Egyptians do not use money transfer agencies as much as other immigrants' groups because they find them too expensive and therefore useful only in cases of great emergency. The bank transfer channel is linked to wider economic considerations such as the financial management of money: first of all it requires a receiving bank account in Egypt that not many migrants do have. Many of the interviewed, however, said they had opened an account in Egypt both because of the needs of the wives remained at home (these women are given access to the account) and because of the high revenues due to the 10-11% interests applied by Egyptian banks to the deposits in local currency. Second, an account in Italy is also required. Nearly all the people interviewed in Sesto San Giovanni opened it to receive the salary, to guard savings or to have access to house mortgages; self-employers (as seen, there were many among them) considered the bank an essential instrument to their activity even if, it was not the chartered loans channel at the beginning. The bank institutes that have the higher number of Egyptian holders of current accounts are *Banca Popolare di Milano* and *BancaIntesa* followed by banks that have been mentioned at least once: *San Paolo-Imi*, *Banca Popolare di Bergamo* (especially for loans), *Banca Popolare di Vicenza*, *Carisbo*, *Carige*, *Credito Artigiano*, *BancoPosta*. None of the interviewed had an account at the local bank, the *BBC* of Sesto San Giovanni. When asked about this, the bank proved the existence among its 12 branches of 27 accounts held by Egyptians, nearly all of them employed. The bank expressed on its end, real interest in widening its foreigner customer base, especially the self-employers one.

It is possible thereby to say that, notwithstanding the high number of Egyptians holding an Italian account, the bank channel for remittances forwarding is generally unused. Some reasons for this are detectable. First, the easy and frequent use of temporarily going back home migrants as couriers; especially in those Milan areas hosting many expatriates, it is easy to find someone who is going to Egypt (it is not a problem, if money arrives in Cairo, to involve a relative to go there to get it). Besides, this practice has a trust, solidarity and exchange strengthening function among migrants and is fitting, avoiding expenses, taxations and giving the opportunity to family members to change foreign currency at convenient rates at the black market. Second, not always a family member holds an Egyptian receiving account and, in emergency cases, money transfer agencies provide more efficient services. The bank channel is used only when large amounts have to be transferred or when in Egypt there are accounts wives have access to.

On the Egyptian end, was possible to get some information on the use and management of remittances. If the expatriate is not married, money is addressed to the father or to the older among the brothers stayed at home (when the father has died or is too old to administer it). If he is married, money is addressed to his wife; this does not mean that the origin family is forgotten: two cases where money was sent in two different envelopes were found.

Forwarding remittances by this informal channel does not depend on how much migrants are used to bank services, methods and strategies. Migrants usually open an Egyptian account when they get married and give their wives access to it (in some cases to their father or brother too). Banks are used for savings only: they do not work as remittances forwarding channel, but are the place where remittances are later deposited. According to Bahna Agricultural Bank, these accounts are divided into two equal parts: 50% in foreign currency and 50% in the local one; this two-sided choice lets the holder of the account enjoy foreign currency stability on one side and local currency high interests revenues on the other. According to the interviews and to this bank too, there are lots of still not invested remittances amounts.

When the migrant is not married, it is the father who administrates remittances and keeps informed (but do not consults) his son about the use he makes of money in everyday expenses. Of course, the migrant

can freely choose how to build and furnish his house and decide about his personal savings. When the migrant is the head of the family, he is the only one who administrates and takes decisions (apart from everyday expenses decisions which are among exclusive wife's duties). All information and advices are asked the head of the family migrant by phone: it is the most used channel of communication; migrant and family keep in touch nearly every day and this practice does not seem to get weaker as the migration experience goes forward.

Was already mentioned that, expenses for the departure (especially for the departure of the first son), are often afforded through a loan contracted inside the family context. If the loan was given by a bank, it must be repaid at the soonest. If departure could be afforded thanks father's savings, the debt is instead considered a deal with the family: the migrant will not repay the loan but will commit himself to take part in the household economy in years to come. As a matter of fact, the family tends to live in a single building, especially in rural areas, where singles' resources are put together for the common good. At the beginning the help expected from the migrant will support house maintenance and management, education of younger brothers, etc... With regard to education, it's relevant to underline that, although theoretically free in Bahna region as in many others of Egypt, it involves expenses that families necessarily have to undertake. Teachers and professors' low salaries gave birth to a parallel school system that takes place in the afternoons and that is completely financed by students' families. This system is so deep-rooted that public teaching is nearly useless while in the afternoons teachers give different lessons according to the prices students can afford.

Later the migrant is expected to support family's exceptional expenses: house modernization or building, brothers and sisters' weddings, other family members' departures.

On ground analysis gave us the possibility to determine positive and negative impacts of remittances. Standards of life have surely increased, especially after the introduction of Euro. Enhancements can be seen in food, house, education and means to start small economic activities. An important negative aspect is linked to the irregular distribution of income in the region: investments in land or houses let prices crazily rise so that families that do not have members abroad are unlikely to afford such expenses. As a consequence, *mahr* has become an essential and strategic institution.

Remittances income distribution and occupational fostering generated by real estate investments reach other villages: migrants' high income availability has strong appeal and causes an emigration race furthering manpower lack in the origin micro-context. So the companies appointed for the construction of migrants' houses and buildings have to look for workers outside the village where the work takes place. The same can be said for small trade activities and land too is rent to people coming from villages in the nearby.

It is therefore difficult to determine the real remittances impact on income distribution but, let alone the building boom, there have been not effective support to the economic local development as no new and differentiated enterprise has been created and the migratory flows-based economy that is rising does not seem able to exploit remittances to favour its endogenous development.

3.2 Economic plans and investments

As have already said, in the first stage of the migrants' stay, almost all savings, all the money left after everyday expenses is sent home and used for loan repayment, house and wedding. After this (nearly compulsory) period has ended, many migrants enter a phase where plans can be done and real economic actions take place.

First of all, investments on the Egyptian soil will be analysed and then it will be attempted to determine the reasons why, on the contrary, migrants living in Sesto San Giovanni are inclined to invest their savings on the Italian one.

The research undertaken in Egypt detected two fundamental types of investments: land (in rural context) and small projects such as trading activities, taxi, real estate investments. In the economic activity, fitting to the traditional canons prevails (partly because of the social and identity acknowledgment). In order to carry out land or small project investments, the migrant turns to his family and friends to receive suggestions and keep informed about potential good bargains. The family considers themselves as natural and essential mediator between the migrants and the origin context in the investment preparation and realization and the lack of familiarity and information is considered a heavy handicap for migrants too, who try to overcome it exactly through family and reliable friends' support. Even to open small trade activities the advice of family members, friends or people working in the same field is preferred, distrusting institutional structures such as the Chamber of Commerce: migrants apply to it only to carry out the papers once the project has already been set up.

These investments are usually brought to end by the family member who has access to the migrant's bank account or when the latter comes temporarily home and closes the negotiation begun by the family. The family (or close and trustful friends, one case was found) themselves can be directly involved in the investment, looking after its set up, its management or being employed in it. The questioned bank institute (Bahna Agricultural Bank) confirmed that migrants delegate bank relationships to family members or partners while they are away.

The investment choice derives from the migrant's duty: family outliving support. In some cases was told that the set up of an activity involving relatives' employment is the result of migrant's will to "keep busy and away from the streets" younger family members. Traditional investment choice is eventually the result of a strategic estimation: keeping a low profile prevents from beggars and corrupted (or so reckoned) institutions, besides avoiding choking tax rates and further bank loans.

In the countryside, besides these motivations, people are aware that land and agricultural activities are the safest investments in a so unstable economic situation like the Egyptian one.

Conditions in cities seem little different. All interviewed families underlined that to open an activity or to carry out profitable investments, movement from the countryside to the city is necessary. In some cases the activity geographical area notably widens when migrants decide to invest in cities like Cairo or Alexandria which are far away from the origin context; in other cases the close Bahna is privileged. Nevertheless migrants' activities nor in Bahna or in Kafr Saad were found. Similarly, it was impossible to determine how much emigration towards Italy influences and boosts the development of economic and trade activities in the city. Bahna's Chamber of Commerce, in fact, has not these data and to make estimation local traders were trusted: according to them, 20-30% of the trade activities were set up with capital coming from migrants in Italy.

In Bahna accurate interviews were made with businessmen who have a migratory experience in Italy or who have import-export trade relationships with that country: the owner of a restaurant, the owner of a shoes company, the importer of adhesive material and dry cleaner machinery and three traders (foodstuffs retail shop, fabrics shop, shoes shop).

It is interesting to point out that, the three trade activities existed before migrants' departure and that the latter took over them: remittances and savings performed in Italy were used to reconstruction and improvement of the activity even if in only one case (fabrics trader) the migratory experience aimed to this purpose since the beginning. The fabrics trader is also the one who spent the shortest time in Italy (two years) and his come-back was seen as a failure (no regularization, no permanent job, come-back, lack of feasibility to return to Italy). The other two traders, on the contrary, came back on their will to come together with their families again (wives and sons).

On the Egyptian side, both in the rural and urban context, economic and work re-integration follow patterns that come from accurate and strategic evaluations. Come-backs determine the total rejection of the "work ethics" learned in Italy (split up of work and free time, punctuality, fair and transparent work

relationships) and the re-acceptance of practices, being "Egyptian", considered to be the sole possible: informality, importance of personal relationships outside a clear and distinct normative framework, corruption. Migrants hardly use the skills learned in Italy; indeed they consider them useless in the origin context. According to interviewed people, at present there is no way to exploit those capacities. In particular, work and economic integration in the area surrounding Milan takes place in fields that develop skills one can not apply in Egypt, nor when he comes back or to train other would-be migrants.

However, in Bahna already exist two interesting cases that profit by skills transfer from Italy to Egypt. They are an entrepreneur in the shoes field and another one in the paper production field (it was not possible to interview the latter). Both keep regularly in touch with Italy and Italian technicians looked after the assembling and installation of machinery and training of local employees. Common migratory experiences can be sometimes propaedeutic to start an activity involving abilities and skills learned in Italy: the owner of an Italian restaurant in Bahna shares his migratory experience (same place and time) with the before mentioned entrepreneur in the paper production field. His more developed linguistic skills are complementary if not even necessary to the entrepreneur's professional relations with the European country. Eventually the "optimization" of the relative's stay abroad for trade purposes (import-export) was recorded: the importer of adhesive material and dry cleaner machinery trusts his (migrated and regularly employed in a cleaning company) brother's mediation and linguistic abilities to purchase goods and have them delivered.

The "shoes entrepreneur" also underlines that it is difficult to find skilled staff not because of training lack (he personally trains his employees) but because there are not many people willing to remain in Egypt.

The Egyptian migrants met in Italy highlight their clear disposition to invest in Italy first, and their strong hesitation to do the same in Egypt, at least in the short-middle term. Made interviews, both with employers and employees (permanent workers, temporary workers, unemployed people), dealt with themes such as investment, fruitful destination of money and possibility to go back home as entrepreneur.

Some Egyptians decided to autonomously start an activity, usually concentrating in the construction, cleaning, trade and catering fields. The first two are clearly characterised by strong connection and continuity between employee and employer condition. In the cleaning and building fields, migrants shift from employee to employer condition sometimes "in a haphazard fashion", sometimes thanks to promotion but more often because of personal initiative.

This shift is the result of an "on field experience" that raises and creates a new activity pulling itself apart from the *mother* one. Actually, Egyptian employers highlight this sort of *filiation*, sometimes strongly linked to the former employer who takes economic and logistic advantage of the new enterprise:

I opened my VAT number, now I have my own (cleaning) company; I started it one year and a half ago. I am in good relation with the Italian I worked with; with the new Biagi Law he hasn't good profit employing strangers, so he told me to open my VAT number to have his work subcontracted. I already had this intention but he encouraged me and It was easy because I could live on what he gave me and later I could find some works by myself too (M. int. 7)

Even in the construction field similar situations were found, so much so that a late survey on the Egyptian constructor enterprise in Lombardy speaks of "hidden forms of employed labour"³⁹. So, starting an enterprise is often an alternative way to keep working in the same field but economically,

³⁹ In particular see C. Codagnone's research "Gli imprenditori egiziani nel settore dell'edilizia" in the already mentioned Chiesi and Zucchetti's work (2003).

socially and personally raising one's own condition. This is an already well defined form of adaptation to the local market but, it nevertheless points out both economic and social acclimatization ability and aptitude to entrepreneurship (this Egyptian aptitude has already been analysed in other researches, included the one developed by CeSPI in Milan, Rome and Reggio Emilia for IMIS project).

Sesto San Giovanni Egyptians' entrepreneurship deals also with Islamic butcher shops, restaurants and some phone centre. This second group of activities seems more independent from the respective local market and is still strongly characterized by an immigrants' customer base. Following Ambrosini and Schellenbaum's famous classification⁴⁰, it is possible to define cleaning and construction companies as "open companies", *where ethnic features are not to be found in the products and services they offer and that rather belong to the network supporting self-employed activity creation*. On the contrary, restaurants, foodstuffs shops and call centres are "ethnic companies", where the products and services provided mainly look at immigrated communities' peculiar needs.

Find here below Milan Chamber of Commerce sum up table on Sesto San Giovanni individual activities with Egyptian employer⁴¹

	From 1970 to 1979	From 1980 to 1989	From 1990 to 1999	From 2000 to 2009	TOTAL
	People	People	People	People	People
D Manufacturing activities	1	1	3	8	14
F Construction activities	1	1	7	64	74
G Wholesale and by retail trade activities - personal & household goods	0	2	3	2	8
H Hotels and restaurants	0	0	6	7	13
I Transports, storage and communications	1	0	1	11	13
J Monetary and financial intermediation	0	0	1	0	1
K Real estate, rent, computer, research activities	0	0	26	75	101
O Further public, social and personal services	0	0	1	0	1
X Non classified enterprises	0	0	5	30	35
TOTAL	3	4	53	197	260

This Egyptian migrants' initiative for self-employed activities can be explained, according to each single case, through would-be employers' high human capital (education and professional skills, especially in the construction field); through would-be employers' ability to craft and exploit social capital networks and resources of natives and fellow-countrymen's communities generating great working possibilities; sometimes thanks to the money availability some migrants from the Egyptian

⁴⁰ C.f. Ambrosini, M., Schellenbaum, P. (edited by) 1994. "La comunita' sommersa. Un'indagine sull'immigrazione egiziana a Milano", *Quaderni ISMU*, n. 3.

⁴¹ The table does not offer data relative to the 50s and 60s, when weak influence is to be found. They were nevertheless included in the final numbering.

middle-high social class have at their disposal combined with their clear and planned intention to exploit the migratory experience to set up a self-employed activity abroad.

Common feature of all these employers is the destination of their financial investment: everyone chooses to invest their funds surplus in the host (Italian) and not origin (Egyptian) society, at least at the moment. Here are some evidences:

My plan is to work for some years regularly as worker and then to develop my own project: saving some money and starting an activity here in Italy and may be later in Egypt. First in Italy, it's better, as the market here is free, you work well. In Egypt there's some crisis now, you can't have good business immediately and must have large amounts at your disposal. Here there are fewer difficulties to overcome if you want to open an activity, any activity. Once the Italian activity has grown, then you can think about starting something there, also to let people living there work. Let's say you do things here first, everyone thinks so because here the market is good (F. int. 4).

I'd like to invest in Egypt but I think it's impossible because things there are different; here in Italy you have an advantage: if you show your skills, your reliability, you can have good business while in Egypt big companies already satisfy all the market and leave no room for little enterprises, which cannot actually gain. When I will have some savings, sure I'll start an activity there but, for the time being, my plans are here in Italy, at least for the next ten years as I am right now still trying to build up my own company (S. int. 14).

Employers and would-be employers seem to share the same opinions about origin and host countries: in Italy it is easy and promising to start a self-employed activity, there is no need for a large opening amounts (for construction and cleaning activities 5.000 € or less are sufficient; between 10.000 and 20.000 € for butcher shops and phone centres); it is easier to have business and the success criteria are based on your merit and on your good relations; in Egypt perspectives are more uncertain; risks are considered higher; taxes, laws and corruption strongly curb entrepreneurial spirit and do not safeguard little enterprises; beyond that, in the countryside areas such as Bahna there actually are not interesting opportunities on the market. In some cases, Kafr Saad migrants on one hand highlighted the lack of investments perspectives in their village which is more and more under populated and more and more dependent upon Bahna, on the other hand showed a higher interest to the urban context, where foodstuffs, phone centres, taxi and mechanic activities could be more profitable.

Anyway, the entrepreneurial interest for Egypt does not disappear but realistic considerations lead many migrants to spend many years in Italy improving and/or acquiring new skills in order to go back to the origin country later. According to migrants' talks, the Egyptian activity should not follow and replace the Italian one, therefore involving a definite come-back but should be additional to it and be led through the migrant's commuting presence. This double activity possibility is seen as a diversification strategy which raises profits and lowers risks and which involves an existential formula appreciated by most migrants: half time in Egypt, half time in Italy:

Life here is "quick", I'm used to its working standards; in Egypt they are much slower, less reliable. It's hard to turn this way again and to go back to your village, moreover the income is not that high and it's dangerous to come back and soon after to start an activity: you'd better check the business there before living your company here. You should keep you activity here and leave to your brother the Egyptian one, you should "wait for its outcome" and if it is paying you can think about leaving. But it is too risky to leave here to open something there, nobody will do that. (...) Somebody started two activities, one here and the other in Bahna, maybe a cleaning activity here and a shop there, as the city there is big, there's the university, thousand of people enter the city everyday and shop have high incomes (A. int. 1).

Anyway, an investments in Egypt can be considered "traditional", as before defined, that is to say small activities for family's subsistence, run by a reliable relative and sometimes linked to the Italian experience: one Sesto San Giovanni migrant was opening two butcher shops at the same time and wanted to look personally after them simultaneously thanks to frequent trips Italy-Egypt. In any case, these are trading and services activities (shops and transport) in cities or foodstuff and agricultural activities in the countryside, that will hardly create employment at community level and therefore have a boosting effect on local economy. From this point of view, apart from these little family's subsistence companies, there seems to be few migrants in Sesto San Giovanni able to handle important investments:

Darwish or Yasser can do investments there, others cannot because they don't have enough money and don't have ambitious plans. But I don't believe the rich ones are thinking about investing in Egypt because who spent 10 years here, has forgotten the rules there are there; if you invest there, you will loose a high percentage and you will never be able to recover it (M. int. 7)

Let us take now into consideration Yasser's evidence, who is a successful Sesto San Giovanni employer with different activities, some of them still not fully operative (a cleaning company, a bakery, a butcher shop, a phone centre and a construction enterprise), and finally some conclusive brief elements will be showed:

An activity in Egypt may be in the future, but now I'm here in Italy, I like having business here. To make any business you have to be where the business is but if I'm in Italy how can I make it in Egypt? If you tell your brother in Kafr Saad to stay there and give him 2 millions E.P. to start an activity, he will say he wants to come to Italy as his brother built a 5 storey house and let her sisters marry. Then he believes that as you've given him money, that is your money and not his, he will become his brother's employee. But I'll tell you something: people in Egypt did it all wrong! We told one of our brothers to stay there also because my parents are getting old and need more and more care; while we work in Italy he looks around for good business in Egypt, maybe a shop, a café', but the important thing is to be there to take the money we send and invest them in an activity. He said he wanted to come here; he's the one arrived two months ago.

In Kafr Saad there's only one good thing: land purchase. A really interesting investment could be finding a good place to make a building for any industrial activity, a stocking factory for example: there's a contact with a Japanese company which is looking for someone in Egypt who can find them a site and materials but 80% of the product goes back to Japan, they give you the car and leave you the remaining 20% to sell it in Egypt. They need a person able to look after the organization there in Egypt, who keeps in touch with clients and suppliers, finds the site and looks after the building phase, etc... I am in contact with the Italian market and know that many productive areas are moving to other places, Eastern Europe, because here there are many problems linked to job, taxes and expenses. This can be done in Egypt, can't it? We make a society; I find them the place, and everything they need to bring this to end, allowances, experience, materials, Italian market. The same as in Bahna happened with Toshiba. If we will be able to bring a displacing branch of the company to Egypt, this would be good for me, for Egypt, for the company, for Europe. I would have some land in Kafr Saad, it takes you nothing to build a shed, only the money is needed and you solve even the problem of allowances, two or three months and you open! You only need to go to the Mayor, to tell him that you are developing a project that will let a lot of people work there, that it will create wealth and he will allow you to do it. In Egypt there's now great need of rolling shutters, armoured doors, air conditioners as they are building so many houses. In Egypt we don't have all these "mechanical" stuff: if we start producing them, they will be cheaper (Y. int. 16).

Trying to reach a conclusion about the economic and investments plans, it is possible to say that:

- An employed activity in Italy usually corresponds to little and "traditional" investments in the native context aimed to family's subsistence and differentiated according to the family's place of living [agricultural purpose land purchase, real estate building, small retail shops (agricultural tools, school, foodstuff and accessories in general) in rural areas; phone, computer and transport services, mechanical assistance and sale in the urban context].
- Migrants are inclined to start a self-employed activity in Italy first, and only later invest in Egypt. In any case they do not leave the Italian job but run them simultaneously. The aim of the double activity is, from the entrepreneurial point of view, to differentiate investments in order to protect themselves from bankruptcy risks; from the family point of view, to give a job and means of subsistence to relatives and to arrange for the come-back.
- A part from these little individual/family investments (whose tiny expansion prospects are clearly foreseen by the people interviewed), no other bigger or more pioneering entrepreneurial enterprise able to have an actual positive impact on local development seems to arise.

The research has therefore highlighted that the living interest for the home country does not necessarily correspond to a dynamic of expatriated migrants' capitals remittances and economic planning. Strong and articulated strategies are needed to attract migrants' return capitals, to create new conditions for investments and, most of all, to oppose the difficulties migrants face when thinking about using their money in the home land, such as poor knowledge of the local market, weak local guarantees against a strong risk perception of investments (supported by other migrants' experience), non transparent procedures of allowances and governmental bonds, eventually different expectations between migrant and his family (different entrepreneurial visions and skills, desire to migrate). It is absolutely necessary to develop new initiatives able to strengthen the existing conditions, services and planning in order to boost both the poor, still emerging, entrepreneurship and the spare, still higher quality one (i.e. import-export), that can be likely interested to invest in Egypt.

4. THE MIGRANT AS A DEVELOPMENT AGENT? CRITICAL NOTES AND GUIDELINES

On end, the main relevant facts emerged from this research are exposed. In a second time some possible guidelines for the IMIS project and the different actors in both analyzed area, starting by the migrants' role, will be suggested.

The multi-sited research enabled the highlighting of some key elements on genesis, development and propagation of migration chains linking together particular geographical contexts in Qalyubiya Governorate, specifically Banha and contiguous rural villages, with the urban belt towns north of Milan. These chains are still very active despite the strict regulation on migration flows, entailing almost only illegal departures, which become irregular presences on the Italian territory. It is possible to characterize a cumulative and growing process of the migration chain that, started by some pioneers, strengthens and self-fosters during the time, through the spreading and emulation outcomes involving family members, new families coming from this village and the neighbouring ones.

The native setting appears to be deeply marked by a strong trend toward emigration directed to Italy and departures seems to involve a progressively younger age group, attracted by the possibility of making huge incomes that are needed more and more to accommodate soon their reproductive cycle. All these widespread expatriations lead to the deprivation of large parts of the young active, and often well-schooled, population and the effects will be analyzed in their local impact along with the feedback of already expatriated migrants' transnational action. For instance, the loss of manpower in villages like Kafr Saad attracts worker from the neighbouring areas mostly in the field of building or in small trading activities implemented by the migrants.

As far as migrants' relations with their native context concerned, adhesion to social and cultural values of the native country appears from social actions (firstly, the marriage) and economic conduct (remittances transfer, expenses control in Italy, saving tendency) that meet the economic, social and affective expectations coming from the family at migrant's departure, and confirm and strengthen his membership to the native context. However, the arrival context and socio-economic adaptation to the foreign setting can lead to makeover of time and projects to the original migration path, extending the staying preconditions and rearranging the migrant's choice.

Thus, the return is delayed, whereas the working and living reality in the new Italian context seem to absorb, in short-medium term, most of migrants' current energy and projects. On the other side, when they permanently come back, they seem to firmly re-adapt to the native context and automatically forsake all the abilities acquired abroad and, in some measure, also the work performed and values learnt during the stay (reliability, punctuality, commitments respect, formality, separation between working time and relations time).

The remittances flow does not seem to stop, also if it has some variations during time but in the first staying phase the money are strongly absorbed by debts compensation, family obligations (family support, brothers' education and marriage, new departures) and personal one (building/restoration of the house and marriage).

Despite the growing well-settlement in Italy and the use of banks, the remittances are still mainly transferred by informal channels, implying both expenses reduction and less control on savings usage. The great importance of the informal way highlights how the average amount of remittances is much bigger than the one got during the first CeSPI's research for IMIS project. On average, it is possible to asses an annual flux of about 5.000/6.000 Euro for settled migrants.

Investments, which are possible only when the Egyptian migrants fulfilled all the unavoidable obligations previously seen, are preferably implemented in Italy, where there seem to be easier, more propitious and more consequent to the new life. Anyhow, also if consecutive and dependent from a first

investment in Italy, the starting of investments or activities in Egypt continues to be interesting but at the same time it is discouraged by three different types of difficulties:

- distrust toward Egyptian economic and political environment;
- lack of information and access to consultancy and security tools able to protect and start investments, in addition to the fiduciary relationships with family members (that sometimes are not effective);
- Failed experience of migrants that already tried to invest and scarce tendency to risk, due to fragile entrepreneurial conditions.

The picture drawn by the research is not optimistic. The evolution of the described migration circle seems to be characterized by *brain drain* and *skill shortage* phenomena that have a positive result more for the destination country than for the native one. Certainly, remittances allowed to improvements in the definitely housing conditions, expenditure capacity for education and health and often the possibility to maintain themselves and give support to the family in the future. However, the negative effects seem to balance and sometimes override the positive ones and in the native country it is possible to observe a more and more dependence condition on remittances and migrations.

Nevertheless this picture leaves some space to interventions and measures shaped on the strong relations created between the two analyzed areas, which can awake the Egyptian migrants' well-known entrepreneurial abilities. These migrants can be the main actors in those interventions trying, through focused actions, to go along and strengthen their transnational behaviour and to involve and let them take part into events promoted by Institutions or by actors from the economic, social and cultural reality of both areas. The main idea is that IMIS must have a **territorial approach**, with strong roots in specific contexts. As already highlighted by the previous research, to gather contents and services capacity, IMIS should be equipped with a net of relations with different actors in order to collect and spread information. To be effective, IMIS data-transmission nature must be linked with the actors (particularly migrants and their families or companies) where they act: i.e. in the residence and working places. To be successful in creating links, trading and investments, IMIS needs to adapt to the spontaneous nets that were built by migration chains during time, strengthening them aiming to the Egyptian development. IMIS must be where migrants are, concerning Italy, in particular Milan's metropolitans pole, where the main opportunities to revalue social and economic abilities are.

Concerning the **policy guidelines** raised during the first report carried out by CeSPI in IMIS project framework, this second analysis, focused in a multi-sited way, allows some significant integrations and evolutions.

1. The importance of **revalue Egyptian migrants' entrepreneurship**, creating a net of adequate services to overcome distrust toward Egyptian institutions is confirmed. For this reason their leading role recognition can be crucial and therefore the promotion and support of efforts in creating an **Egyptian entrepreneurs living in Milan's pole net**, starting with a Club with few but very active pioneers that represent their ability and will to act. To this purpose, it can be useful to draw an Egyptian entrepreneurship map and to create a focus group in charge of auto select the Club pioneers.

As far as the Egyptian institutions concerned, they should show their opening towards these business and investment new actors, through the Commercial Consul working in Milan mediation and IMIS structure, giving information and tax breaks normally given only to foreign companies. Egyptian migrants in Italy that already know IMIS ask to overcome the rhetoric, arriving to a clear and defined institutional recognition that must express through concrete and direct acts.

2. **Skill and brain circulation promotion** can be possible in few cases if the features of *waste* (lack of revalue opportunities) existing in both the Egyptian and Italian territories and the limited connection between skills acquired in Italy and demand in Egypt are considered. However, the net creation seen in the previous point can be useful to identify those existing cases of working abilities that can be offered to Egyptian institution and companies. On the other side, this second report identified another cooperation area on migrants resources regarding **remittances revalue**. As explained, there is an important informal flow of remittances, greater than what reckoned in the first research. Part of this flow is spent as already known but a great amount lays in Egyptian banks deposit accounts. **There are great liquid assets that seem to be immobilized; thereby there is the priority to move this cash in significant entrepreneurial enterprises.** To this end, interacting with the previous guideline, this net of Egyptian entrepreneurs living in Milan pole could promote the creation of links between Milan and homeland's banks and chambers of commerce with Italian Cooperation support, to identify and assess economical projects which this existing savings can be invested on. Furthermore, the great saving ability of Egyptian can be an interesting market for advanced financial instruments like **savings build-up plans**, linked with migrants' family and companies' services (insurances and credits). This is the trend of new analysis on remittances revalue. These instruments can be created by both Egyptian and Italian banks integrated together aiming to a more formalized remittances canalization. It might be interesting to promote exchange of knowledge and technical assistance between those Italian banks in Milan area and Egyptian ones in Banha area that are more interested in migrants' financial market in order to establish inter-banking agreements to revalue remittances identifying ad hoc instruments.

3. The multi-sited research confirmed the results of the previous report: Egyptian migrants don't offer cases of **communitarian development initiatives**, apart from those of religious purpose characterized by charitable and not developing features. On the other side, the survey carried out in Banha area showed some curious experiences: the **CDA in Kafr Gamal (Tukh)** for instance, is composed by members with a common migration background in Italy. They repeated the same association structure of *gamaiyat al-khairiya* in Italy, establishing a union of Egyptians expatriates. Once come back to Egypt, they recreated the same structure: beside *gamaiyat al-khairiya* they established the CDA. This association has a direct link with the Egyptian community abroad, which is stimulated through the same channels used to collect the *zakat*: the members of *gamaiyat al-khairiya* and CDA are 15, representing almost all the village's enlarged families. When they submit a project, every representative informs his own enlarged family's members abroad. In this way, the CDA could build a road connecting the village with the city of Tukh (by means of the land purchase where the road was built), three schools, and a small hospital. Another interesting case is a migrant from Saffa (Tukh) that decided to give to doctors of his area a place where to visit outpatients. The added value of this structure is that the maintenance expenses should be paid by the migrant, so the doctors clustered in one place, can make low prices for the visits. These examples, and many others that probably exist in different area of Egypt, could be a case history and net of actors by which it could be possible to create cooperation links between migrants and Italian Institutions (particularly the town ones) where their residence and work is concentrated: the towns of Milan hinterland. These examples can be replied as a system in other settings through IMIS project. The IMIS web site in itself can give visibility and advertise promising initiatives, like the CDA in Kafr Gamal. To this purpose, it will be useful to find a series of successful cases in the Egyptian territory, to report experiences, advertise them and broaden to people their knowledge, create a know-how exchange net and so promote the launching of new enterprises in the native and destination contexts of migrants' chains.

4. The relevance of **cultural cooperation** for Egyptian migrants is confirmed: they ask for instruments that allow them to maintain links with their culture. As highlighted in the previous research, initiatives like cultural exchanges among schools, trips, training aid, events, are welcome and can be more focused in specific migrants' settlement contexts.

5. The importance of the migrant chain for the work introduction of migrants, as evident with the last regularization in Sesto San Giovanni's case, is repeated. What was stated in the previous research is confirmed: **Egyptian migrants are the best brokers in using the quota recognized by Italian Government for Egyptian emigration**. They have more chance to identify and canalize new migrants for working purposes than existing Italian institution do. Formalization of their role would be a really effective act implying great political relevance.

6. As far as the hints aiming to **IMIS web site improvement** concerned, what already suggested in the previous report is ratified. Particularly, all the activities displayed in prior points can be conveyed through appropriate media instruments (films, photos, audio, and texts) in IMIS web site as **narration of a pilot process of migrants' revaluation for local development purpose**. Creation and activities of the Egyptian migrant entrepreneurs' net, social and cultural cooperation initiatives that can be launched at a global level between Milan's area and some Egyptian territory, where migration flows originated (like Banha area), propulsion of bank relations and creation of new financial instruments, could find a suitable space inside the IMIS web site, that can propose itself as focal point among different economic/social/cultural actors involved in a tight partnership. In addition to the data transmission support IMIS offers, it would be proper to join focused activities in both the examined areas to make all the mentioned subjects aware.

As for the Italian context, the public presentation of this research and of IMIS project might be used as a relevant opportunity of knowledge, promotion and development of coordinated and synergic relations among the main actors of Milan context:

- Sesto's municipality and of work-linked institutions awareness towards the settlements realities and economic activities of Egyptian community;
- The main local bank involvement and financial relations building with Egyptian migrants;
- Support to a coordination and association project among different migrant entrepreneurs existing in Sesto San Giovanni.

After this first opportunity, the promotion of an interface with all the Egyptian actors, including representatives of local public powers, Egyptian banks and financial institutions, Village's associations, and local civil society's subjects, could follow. This is a possible contribution to a partnership, on territorial bases, in which proposed activities can meet and be tested.